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MAHATMA

LIFE OF MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

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MAHATMA

IN EIGHT VOLUMES

Volume VI

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MAHATMA

LIFE OF MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

He is the One Luminous, Creator of All, Mahatma,
Always in the hearts of the people enshrined,
Revealed through Love, Intuition, and Thought,
Whoever knows Him, Immortal becomes.

By

D. G. TENDULKAR

Illustrations collected and arranged by

VITHALBHAI K. JHAVERI

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From The Publishers

The first volume depicted the formative period of the national movement and Gandhiji's leadership in the South African struggle and his emergence in the field of Indian politics. The second volume opened with the new epoch, the Gandhian era, and it ended with the passing of the resolution on complete independence at the Lahore Congress on the last day of 1929. The third volume covered some of his subsequent political and social activities: the historic march to Dandi; pleading India's case at the Round Table Conference in London; campaign against untouchability; dynamic approach to swadeshi, and his temporary retirement from the Congress in 1934. The fourth volume depicted his ceaseless activities during 1934-8 in the field of village reconstruction. For full four years Gandhiji concentrated on constructive revolution or teaching the masses the art of turning the idle hours to wealth. His great popularity and organizational genius enabled the Congress to sweep the polls in the general elections of 1937. He confined himself to constructive activities but removed the self-imposed ban on politics by expressing his views fervently through *Harijan* for the benefit of the Congress ministers, Congressmen and the people in general. His articles on prohibition, basic education, duties and rights, the old order and the new, sanitation, medicine, self-control *v.* birth control, art and literature for the masses became the guiding principles to all who wanted to act along the new philosophy of life. Intellectuals and workers from all over the world trekked to his residence in Segaon village to discuss new and old problems. War-clouds seemed to burst when the Munich Pact was signed and he advised the Congress to stand by non-violence in war or peace. There were rumblings in the Indian states and he directed the people's movement. The fifth volume depicted his re-emergence in the political field: the Rajkot struggle for securing rights to the people in the states, and the preparation for fight against the gagging orders during the war

period of 1938-40. The main theme of this volume is Gandhiji's supreme faith in the non-violence of the strong in the critical days of the war. The warrior of peace gave courage to the people of India and the world to try the new weapon of non-violence.

This the sixth volume narrates the momentous events of 1940-5: launching of individual civil disobedience; failure of Cripps mission; the Quit India campaign; imprisonment of the Congress leaders; Gandhiji's epic fast in Aga Khan Palace; indictment of the Congress by the Government and Gandhiji's reply to it; death of Mahadev Desai and Kasturba in the detention camp; Gandhiji's release and the political deadlock. The great lead of Gandhiji and the heroic struggle by the people for the attainment of independence form the theme of this volume. It contains his soul-stirring writings and speeches during the most critical period of the war and his appeal to the British, Americans and Japanese.

The remaining two volumes depict the Gandhian era with its different phases leading to India's freedom.

In this arduous task of collecting material and undertaking the publication of eight-volume biography of Gandhiji, we have had the co-operation from several friends and sympathizers, individual acknowledgements to whom are already made in the introduction to the first volume.

Gandhiji gave his graceful co-operation and thus made our work smoother. Jawaharlal Nehru has taken a keen interest in the publication and continues to give encouragement. R. R. Diwakar has helped us from the very beginning and he has made possible its publication in the present form.

Anu Bandyopadhyaya has given her ample co-operation in seeing the proofs, preparing the glossary and index.

Sumati Morarjee has lent us her unique collection of illustrations for embellishing the biography.

We are thankful to the workers of the Times of India Press for their co-operation.

Although the greatest care is taken in the preparation of this biography, we should be thankful if readers point out any mistakes they may come across in these volumes.

D. G. Tendulkar
Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri

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Jacket and fly-leaf designed by Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri

MAHATMA

Individual Civil Disobedience

1940

On October 17, 1940, Vinoba Bhave inaugurated the individual satyagraha movement by delivering an anti-war speech at Paunar, a village near Wardha. He moved from village to village on foot and made speeches on the three following days. On October 21 he was arrested and sentenced to three months' imprisonment.

The Government had given strict instructions to the press not to give any publicity to Vinoba's speeches or his movements, and had thus in effect put a ban on reporting of the anti-war activities. On October 18 the editor of *Harijan* and the allied weeklies received a notice advising him that "no account of incidents leading up to satyagraha by Vinoba Bhave and no report of his speeches or any subsequent development" be published without previous reference to the Chief Press Adviser, Delhi. In the course of a statement of October 24, Gandhi said:

"I cannot function freely, if I have to send to the Press Adviser at New Delhi every line I write about satyagraha. The three weeklies have been conducted in the interest of truth and, therefore, of all parties concerned. But I cannot serve that interest if the editing has to be done under threat of prosecution. Liberty of the press is a dear privilege, apart from the advisability or otherwise of civil disobedience. The Government have shown their intention clearly by the prosecution of Shri Vinoba Bhave. I have no complaint to make against the prosecution. It was an inevitable result of the Defence of India Rules. But the liberty of the press stands on a different footing. I am unable to reconcile myself to the notice which, although in the nature of advice, is in reality an order whose infringement will carry its own consequence.

"I am sorry to have to disappoint the numerous readers of the three weeklies. Next week, I shall be able to let the public know whether it is merely a suspension or an indefinite stopping of the

three weeklies. I shall still hope that it will be merely a suspension and that my fear will prove to be groundless. But should it prove otherwise, I may inform the public that satyagraha is independent of press advertisement. If it is real, it carries with it its own momentum; and I believe the present satyagraha to be very real. It will go on. I will not be provoked into any hasty action. I am still not ready with the next move. But, as I have said in my previous statement, every act of civil disobedience is complete in itself. This press notice shows how effective it has been. Every act of repression adds strength to reality. Satyagraha thrives on repression till at last the repressor is tired of it and the object of satyagraha is gained. Whether, therefore, I take the next step or not and when I take it is a matter of no consequence to the public. Let those who sympathize with it follow implicitly the instructions I have issued. I believe, and my belief has been tested repeatedly, that a thought deliberately thought and controlled is a power greater than speech or writing and any day greater than steam which is husbanded and controlled. We see the latter every day carrying incredible weights even across the steep precipices. Thought power overcomes much greater obstacles and easily carries greater weights. But let me give a practical hint to the non-believer in the power of thought husbanded and controlled. Let every one become his walking newspaper and carry the good news from mouth to mouth. This does not mean what boys used to do in the past, namely, trumpeting about of bits of news. The idea here is of telling my neighbour what I have authentically heard. This no government can overtake or suppress. It is the cheapest newspaper yet devised, and it defies the wit of government, however clever it may be. Let these walking newspapers be sure of the news they give. They should not indulge in any idle gossip. They should make sure of the source of information, and they will find that the public gets all the information that they need without opening their morning newspaper which, they should know, will contain garbled, one-sided information and, therefore, not worth the trouble of reading. For, it may be that even the public statements such as now I am issuing may also be stopped. It is the condition of life under an autocratic government, whether foreign or indigenous."

Harijan dated November 10 was printed in bold type, bidding "good-bye" to the reader:

"You must have seen through my press notice that the publication of *Harijan* and the other two weeklies had been suspended. In it, I had expressed the hope that the suspension might be only for a week. But I see that the hope had no real foundation. I shall miss my weekly talks with you, as I expect you too will miss them. The value of those talks consisted in their being a faithful record of my deepest thoughts. Such expression is impossible in a cramped atmosphere. As I have no desire to offer civil disobedience, I cannot write freely. As the author of satyagraha I cannot, consistently with my professions, suppress the vital part of myself for the sake of being able to write on permissible subjects such as the constructive programme. It would be like dealing with the trunk without the head. The whole of the constructive programme is to me an expression of non-violence. I would be denying myself if I could not preach non-violence. For that would be the meaning of submission to the latest ordinance. The suspension must, therefore, continue while the gagging lasts. It constitutes a satyagrahi's respectful protest against the gag. Is not satyagraha giving an ell when an inch is asked for by the wrongdoer, is it not giving the cloak also when only the coat is demanded? It may be asked why this reversal of the ordinary process? The ordinary process is based on violence. If my life were regulated by violence in the last resort, I would refuse to give an inch lest an ell might be asked for. I would be a fool if I did otherwise. But if my life is regulated by non-violence, I should be prepared to and actually give an ell when an inch is asked for. By so doing I produce on the usurper a strange and even pleasurable sensation. He would also be confounded and would not know what to do with me. So much for the 'enemy'. I, having made up my mind to surrender every non-essential, gain greater strength than ever before to die for the defence and preservation of what I hold to be essential. I was, therefore, wrongly accused by critics of having advised cowardly surrender to Nazism by Englishmen when I suggested that they should lay down external arms, let the Nazis overrun Britain if they dare but develop internal strength to refuse to sell themselves to the Nazis. Full surrender of the non-essentials is a condition precedent to accession of internal strength to defend the essential by dying.

"But I am not writing this to convert the English to my view. I am writing this to suggest to you that my surrender to the framers

of the gagging ordinance is an object-lesson to you, the reader, in satyagraha. If you will quietly work out in your own life the implications of the lesson, you will then not need the weekly aid from the written word in *Harijan*. Even without your weekly *Harijan* you will know how I shall myself work out the full implications of giving an ell when an inch is wanted. A correspondent pleads with me that on no account should I suspend *Harijan*, for he says his non-violence is sustained by the weekly food he gets therefrom. If he has really done so, then this self-imposed restraint should teach him more than a vapid continuation of weekly *Harijan*."

Jawaharlal Nehru had been chosen to follow Vinoba Bhave on November 7, after giving due notice to the authorities. But he was arrested on October 31 at Chheokhi railway station when he was returning from Wardha after visiting Gandhi. Subsequently, he was tried in Gorakhpur prison and was sentenced to four years' imprisonment for his speeches delivered early in October.

The second satyagrahi was Mr. Brahmo Dutt. On November 7, in the neighbourhood of Wardha, he began shouting the slogan now prescribed: "It is wrong to help the British war effort with men or money. The only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance." He was arrested at once and sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

In mid-November, the second stage of the campaign began with what Gandhi called representative satyagraha. Satyagrahis were selected from groups such as the Congress Working Committee, the A.-I.C.C., and the Congress members of the Central and the provincial legislatures. Many Congressmen, including most of the former ministers, appeared in the streets, uttered slogans and were arrested and sent to prison mostly for a year. The first victim was Vallabhbhai Patel who had given notice of his intention to offer satyagraha. He was arrested on November 17 and was detained under the Defence of India Rules. One by one, all the top leaders were arrested and Rajagopalachari who was still free performed satyagraha by writing to various people urging them to desist from the war effort and was arrested on December 3.

Gandhi ordered suspension of the campaign from December 24 to January 4, as a goodwill gesture for Christmas. By the close of the year 1940, 11 members of the Congress Working Committee, 176 members of the A.-I.C.C., 29 ex-ministers, and more than 400

members of the Central and provincial legislatures, were jailed. On the New Year's eve, Azad was arrested and sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. He had previously told the press that he had favoured a mass movement but "had to yield to Gandhiji".

Gandhi issued the following statement:

"Long before his unexpected arrest, the Maulana Saheb had announced that before offering civil disobedience he would visit Sevagram and would discuss with me the important matters affecting the communal question as also such other matters. But it was not to be. The non-popular rulers do not disclose their intentions to the people. They allow them to be inferred from their acts. Perhaps, it is a legitimate inference to draw from the Maulana Saheb's premature (from the Congress standpoint) arrest that they did not want him to meet me. There can be no cause for a complaint in this. They may not be expected to consult Congress convenience. But it is proper for Congressmen to realize that the rulers have no faith in Congress non-violence. Probably they do not consider me to be a knave, but they do consider me to be a fool. In so doing, they only follow many others who think that Congressmen fool me and that the latter's non-violence is but a cloak for hiding their violence, if it is not a preparation for it. Our struggle, therefore, consists in showing that our non-violence is neither a cloak to hide our violence or hatred, nor a preparation for violence in the near or distant future. Therefore, our success depends not upon numbers going to jail but on the sum-total of the purity and non-violence we are able to show in all our activities. Numbers can count only when they are of the right type. But they will positively harm the movement, if they are of the wrong type.

"For me there is no turning back, whether I have many or very few satyagrahis. I would far rather be regarded as a fool but strong than as a knave and a coward. Though the whole world may repudiate my claim, I must repeat that the struggle is god-guided. I am but a humble instrument in His hand. Without His guidance, real or imaginary, I should feel utterly impotent to shoulder the burden I am supposed to be carrying.

"Let me now say how I visualize the struggle. Maulana Saheb having gone, there is to be no successor appointed. Every acting president in a province must be approved by me. It is not necessary that there should be one. All representative Congressmen from the

members of village to provincial committees are expected to be in jail, if they are fit and approved by me. If they are not, by reason of health or otherwise, they cannot be expected to function except in rare cases, and that too under my approval. No fresh elections are to take place to replace those who will have gone. The idea is ultimately for every Congressman to act on his own and be his own president but nobody else's. That is the conception of a completely non-violent institution or society. Not much direction is required by those who have learnt the art of suffering. Everybody knows the conditions he has to fulfil for acquiring fitness for offering civil disobedience. They can be easily complied with by any adult who is sound in body and mind. No difficulty as to action arises so long as I am left free. Nobody can resort to direct action without my consent. My intention not to court arrest abides, but rulers may have a different plan. If it comes, it will be the real time of freedom from external control, be it ever so non-violent as also of true test for everyone. I am not to appoint a successor. Thus if I am arrested everyone will be under the discipline of his or her own conscience. In theory, therefore, a time may come when millions will be judges of their own fitness to offer civil disobedience.

"This is not a struggle which can be ended quickly. We are resisting an authority that is in itself struggling to fight for life against a stubborn foe. The authority is related to a nation which knows no defeat. Those whose life is in danger readily yield on what they regard as non-essential or fight to the end on what they regard as essential. Its refusal to concede our demand shows that they think that our struggle comes under the latter category. Therefore, our struggle must be co-terminous at least with the European. Hence everyone who offers civil disobedience and gets a short term should know that on every release he has to repeat civil disobedience till the end of the struggle.

"There are two tactics demanding attention. One is fines without the option of imprisonment. The other is that of not arresting civil resisters at all. In each case, the resisters should march on foot in easy stages in the direction of Delhi. It may be even two or three miles per day. The resister will march taking such food only as the villagers may provide."

As regards the payment of fines by the satyagrahis, Gandhi gave the following instructions:

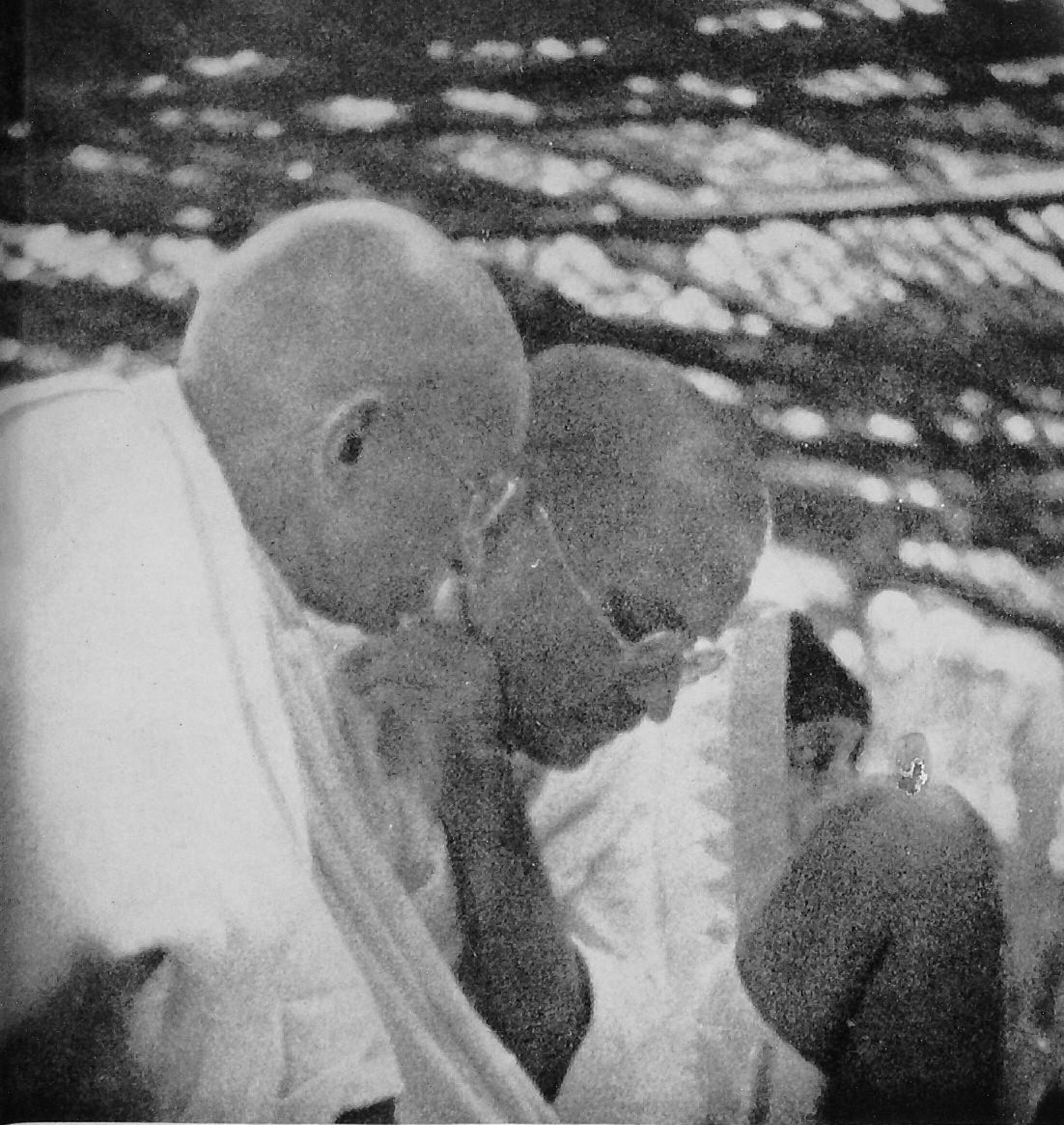
"A very serious question confronts me in connection with this struggle. In many places, magistrates have been imposing heavy fines on civil resisters, in some cases without option of imprisonment. Civil resisters must not and cannot complain of whatever penalty is imposed on them and a Government will always take advantage of weaknesses of human nature. Hitherto I have advised that fines should not be voluntarily paid but that authorities must be left to collect fines by distraint. The result during the last struggle was a great deal of heartburning and bitterness. Those who bought movables or immovables for a song incurred popular ill will. I hope that if the Government wish to touch immovable property, they will not sell but confiscate it. For, whenever the struggle ends immovable property is bound to be restored to the original owners, the resisters. The late Bombay Government know how difficult it was for them to restore to the resisters the immovable properties that had changed hands. I have, however, discovered what may be termed a flaw in the reasoning that I had applied to the infliction of fines. I now feel that even as a resister courts imprisonment, he is expected to court any other form of punishment, that is, fines. Punishment courted has to be joyfully suffered. Therefore, when fines are imposed and the person fined is able to pay, he must do so willingly. The result may naturally be that such a person will be fined again and again. If the resister persists in his resistance, he may have no property left. This is nothing to be wondered at. As a matter of fact, it is the essence of civil disobedience that the resister becomes indifferent, whether the authorities take away all his property or not. Therefore, all the propertied persons who wish to join the struggle should do so well knowing that the whole of their property might be taken up by the Government. This is a struggle which has no ending except in success. Therefore, those who may be fined should pay cash, if they have it. If they have no cash and the Government attach their property, it should be open to their friends to buy the same. This will be an effective check on the cupidity of those who would profit by exploiting others' loss and there will be no bad blood. One corollary to this reasoning is that even as I had declared that every inch of the immovable property sold or confiscated by the Government would have to be returned to the resisters, so will every rupee taken in fines have to be returned to them on the struggle ending. It follows, of course,

that those who pay the fines will have to offer civil disobedience till they are safely lodged in jail. It follows also that those propertied persons who do not wish to run the risk of losing their property must not join this struggle. I hope, however, that patriotic people who believe in the efficacy of civil resistance will not fight shy of losing all the possessions."

On January 5, 1941, the third stage opened. Lists of satyagrahis had been prepared by the local Congress committees, and several persons named therein and certified by Gandhi proceeded to do what was expected of them. "A satyagrahi," said Gandhi, "man or woman once started on satyagraha, if unarrested, shall not return home but shall go from village to village reciting anti-war slogans and addressing anti-war meetings where necessary and doing constructive propaganda. A satyagrahi shall not use any conveyance on his campaign. He need not be in a hurry. He may, if necessary stay more than one day at one place."

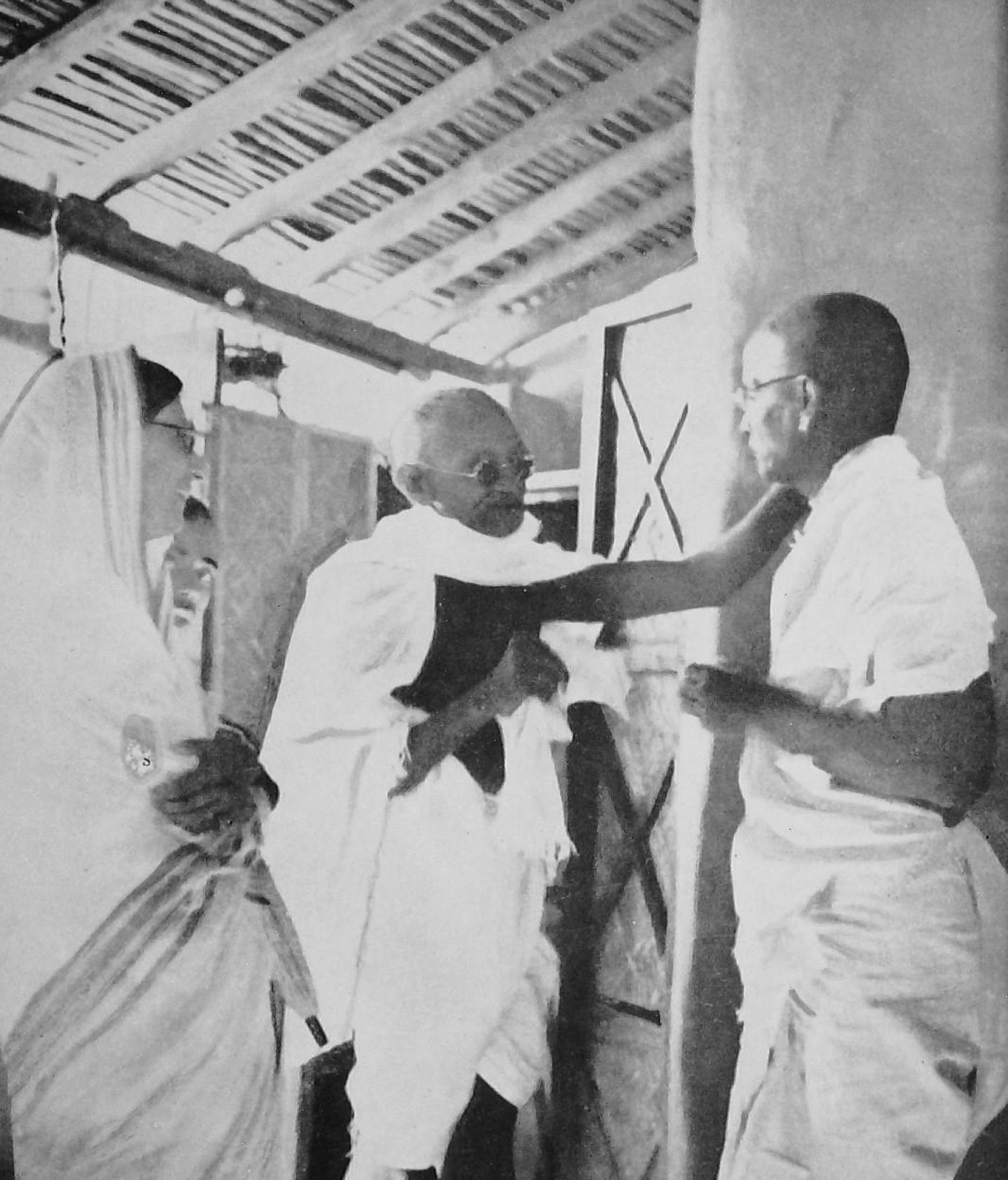
Hundreds of satyagrahis swelled the chorus: "It is wrong to help the British war effort with men or money. The only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance." And by the end of January, the number of convictions had risen to about 2,250. In several of these cases, fines were imposed instead of imprisonment. Both the extent of the movement and the manner in which it was dealt with varied from province to province. It was strongest in the United Provinces and about half the total arrests were made there. The North-West Frontier Province was the least affected and only two arrests were made there. Ghaffar Khan was very active, but he was not touched so far. Dr. Khan Sahib was picked up by the police and driven home. In Bengal, the satyagrahis were mostly left at liberty. On January 27, the sensational news about the disappearance of Subhas Bose from his house, where he was under constant watch of the police, was flashed across the country.

No satyagraha was offered on January 26. The Congressmen celebrated Independence Day as prescribed by Gandhi: "In view of the fact that the individual civil disobedience has already commenced and large number of Congressmen have already been imprisoned all over India, it becomes the special duty of every Indian to concentrate with redoubled zeal on constructive programme, without the fulfilment of which no civil disobedience, mass or individual, can help us to win and retain swaraj."



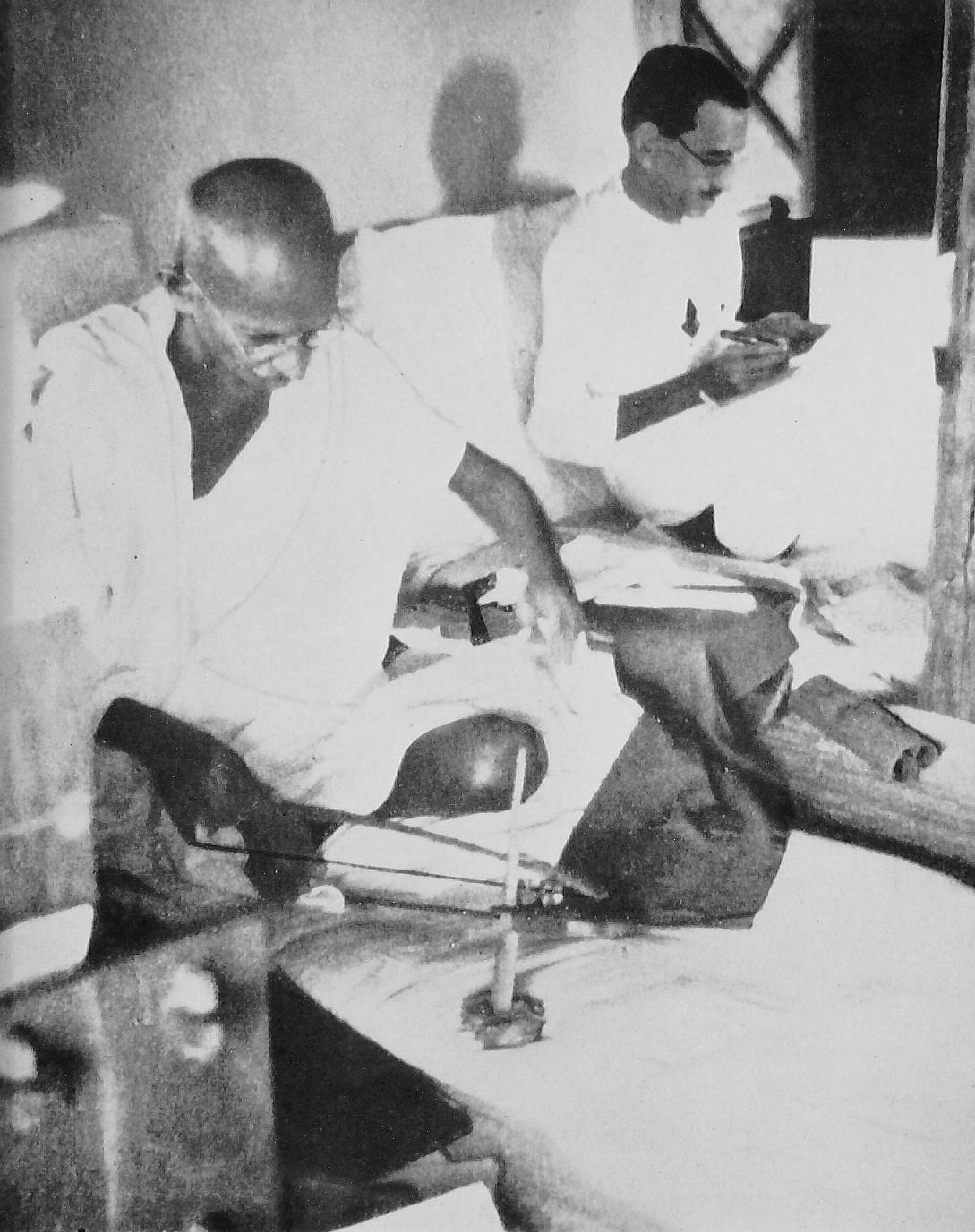
Photograph: Kanu Gandhi

Vinoba Bhave with Gandhi, Sevagram, October 1940



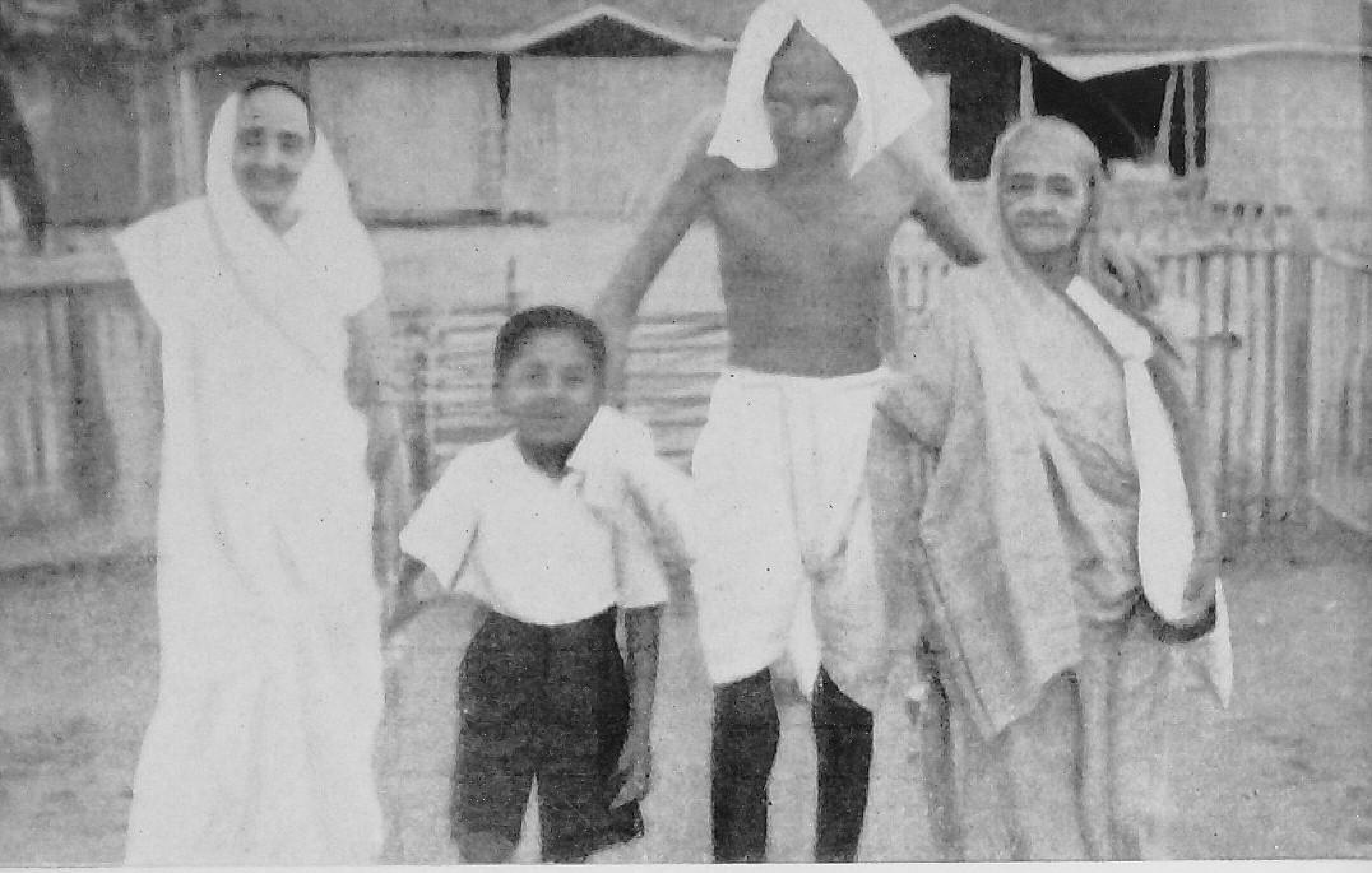
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi instructs Vinoba Bhave on the eve of launching individual satyagraha movement, Sevagram, October 1940



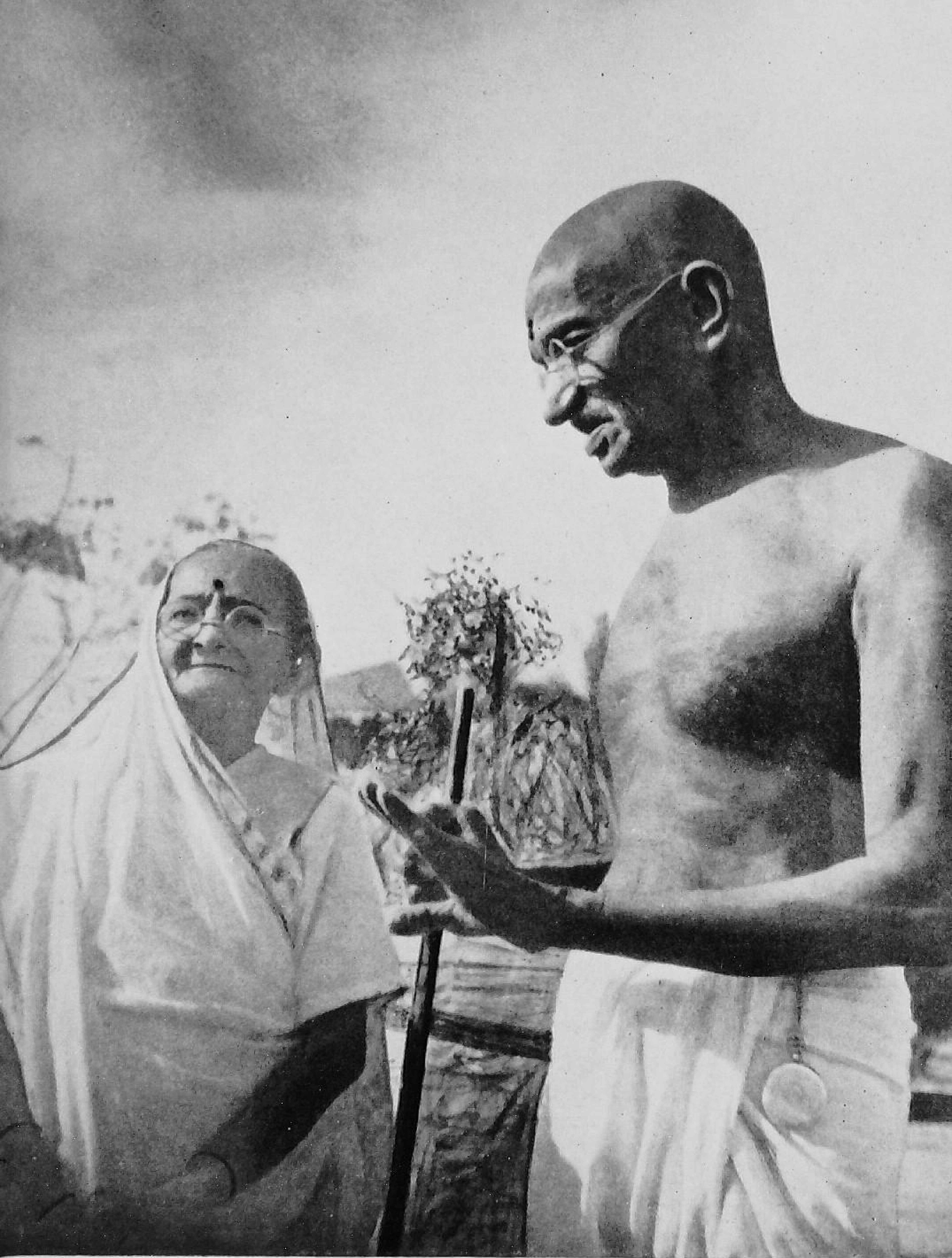
Photograph: Kanu Gandhi

Kishorlal Mashruwala with Gandhi, Sevagram, 1940



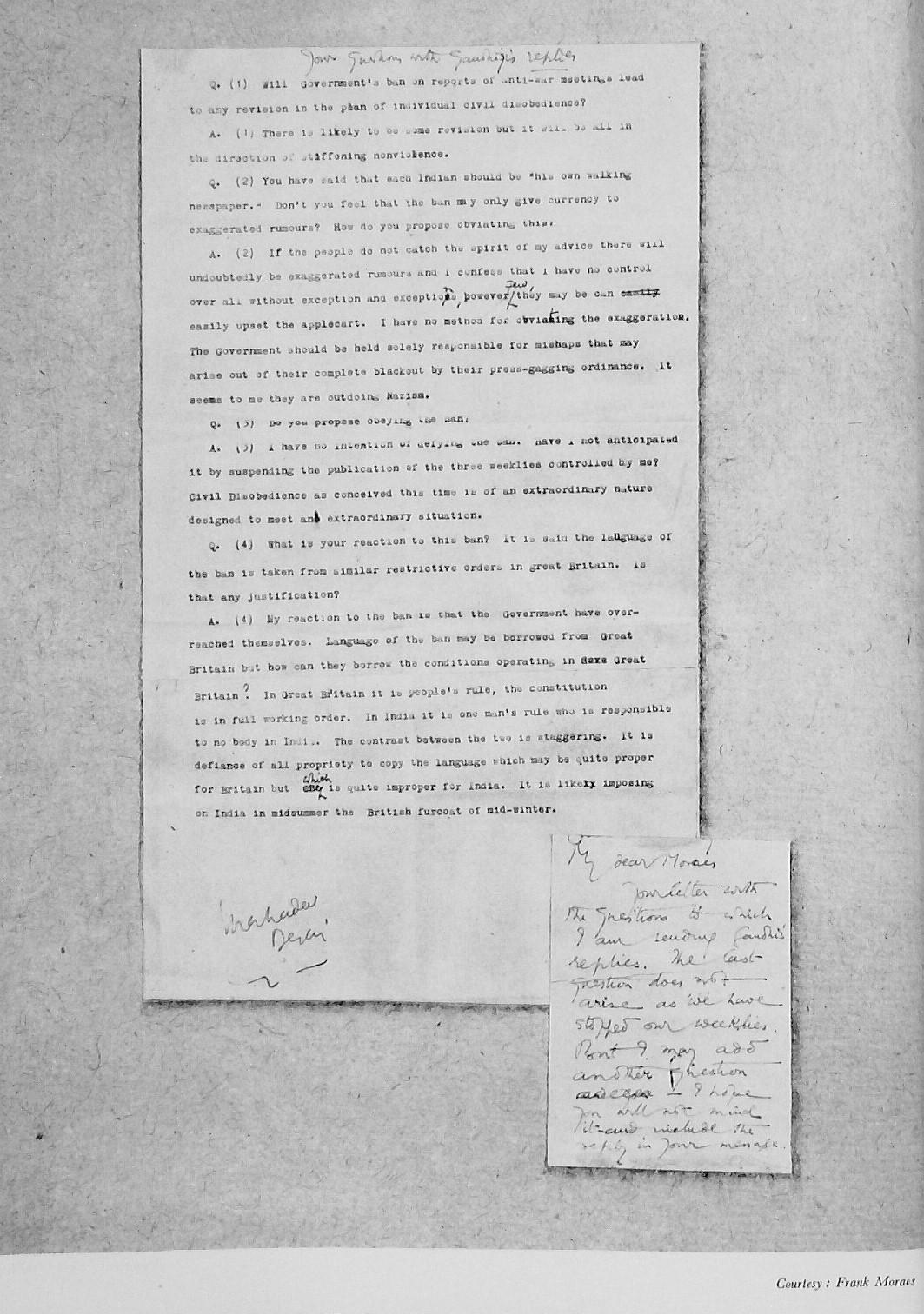
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

During leisure hours at Sevagram, 1940



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Ba and Bapu, Sevagram, 1940



Your Questions with Gandhiji's replies

Q. (1) Will Government's ban on reports of anti-war meetings lead to any revision in the plan of individual civil disobedience?

A. (1) There is likely to be some revision but it will be all in the direction of stiffening nonviolence.

Q. (2) You have said that each Indian should be "his own walking newspaper." Don't you feel that the ban may only give currency to exaggerated rumours? How do you propose obviating this?

A. (2) If the people do not catch the spirit of my advice there will undoubtedly be exaggerated rumours and I confess that I have no control over all without exception and exceptions, however few, they may be can ~~easily~~ easily upset the applecart. I have no method for obviating the exaggeration. The Government should be held solely responsible for mishaps that may arise out of their complete blackout by their press-gagging ordinance. It seems to me they are outdoing Nazism.

Q. (3) Do you propose obeying the ban?

A. (3) I have no intention of defying the ban. Have I not anticipated it by suspending the publication of the three weeklies controlled by me? Civil Disobedience as conceived this time is of an extraordinary nature designed to meet an extraordinary situation.

Q. (4) What is your reaction to this ban? It is said the language of the ban is taken from similar restrictive orders in great Britain. Is that any justification?

A. (4) My reaction to the ban is that the Government have over-reached themselves. Language of the ban may be borrowed from Great Britain but how can they borrow the conditions operating in ~~Gaxe~~ Great Britain? In Great Britain it is people's rule, the constitution is in full working order. In India it is one man's rule who is responsible to no body in India. The contrast between the two is staggering. It is defiance of all propriety to copy the language which may be quite proper for Britain but which is quite improper for India. It is likely imposing on India in midsummer the British furcoat of mid-winter.

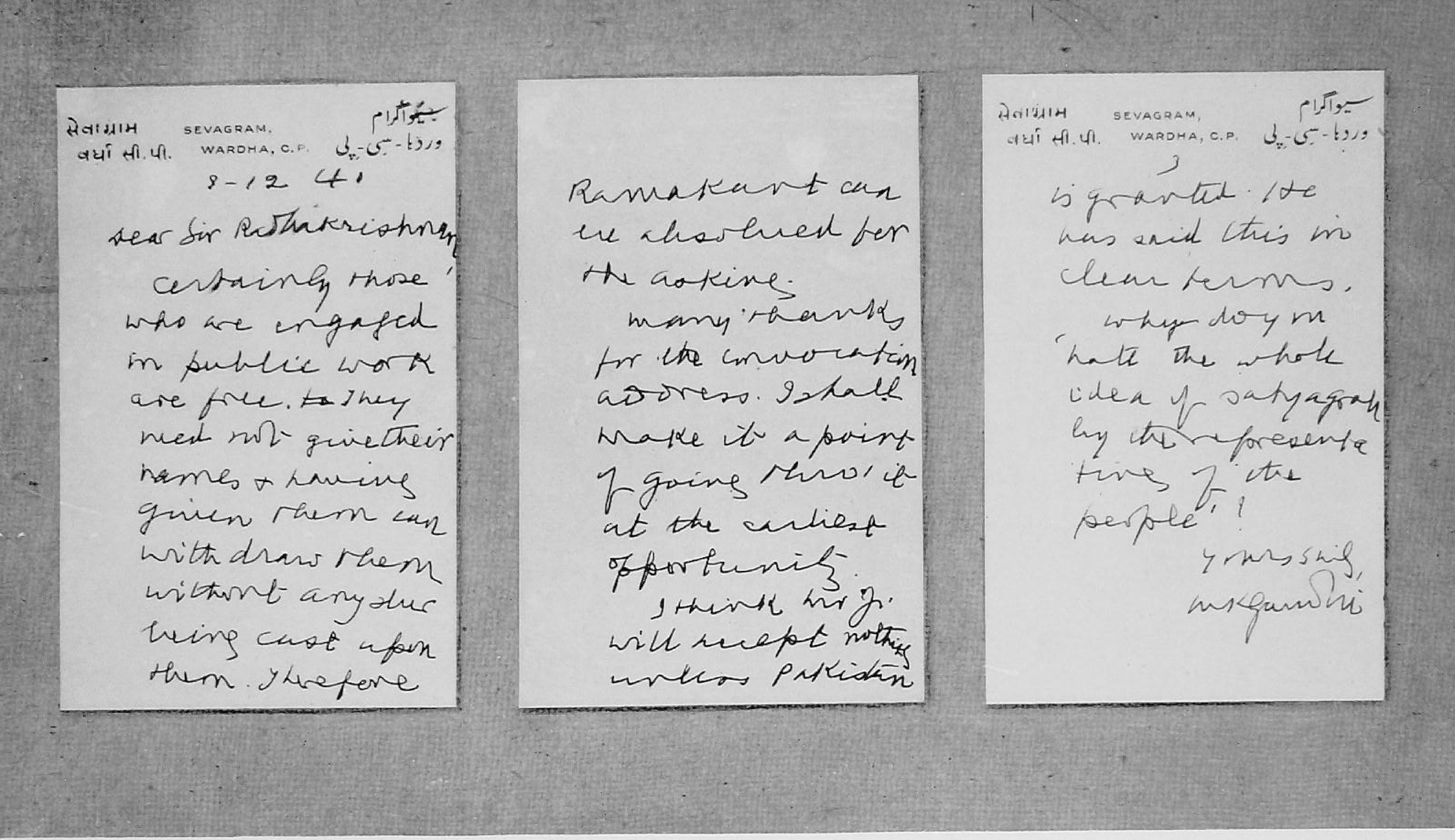
Mahadev Desai

My dear Moraes

Your letter with the questions to which I am sending Gandhi's replies. The last question does not arise as we have stopped our weeklies. But I may add another question ~~[illegible]~~ I. I hope you will not mind it and include the reply in your message.

Courtesy: Frank Moraes

Gandhi's replies to questions put by Mr. Frank Moraes on behalf of *News Chronicle*, London, November 1940



सेवाग्राम SEVAGRAM, سیواگرام
वर्धा सी.पी. WARDHA, C.P. وردھا سی۔پی

8-12 40

Dear Sir Radhakrishnan,

Certainly those who are engaged in public work are free. They need not give their names & having given them can withdraw them without any slur being cast upon them. Therefore Ramakant can be absolved for the asking.

Many thanks for the convocation address. I shall make it a point of going thro' it at the earliest opportunity.

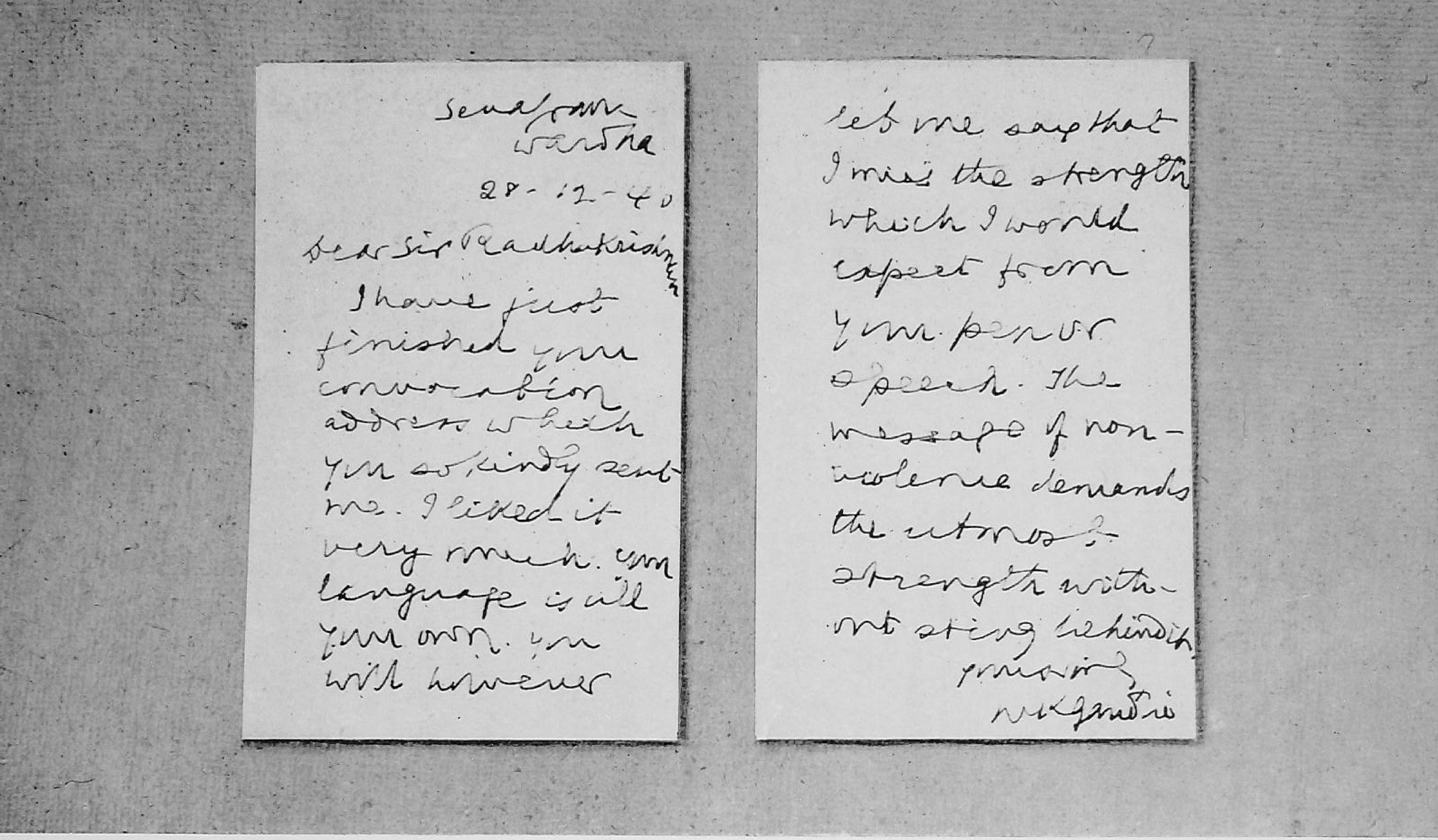
I think Mr. J. will accept nothing unless Pakistan is granted. He has said this in clear terms.

Why do you 'hate the whole idea of satyagraha by the representatives of the people'?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

Courtesy: S. Radhakrishnan

Gandhi's letter to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, dated Sevagram, December 8, 1940



Sevagram
Wardha

28-12-40

Dear Sir Radhakrishnan

I have just finished your convocation address which you so kindly sent me. I liked it very much. Your language is all your own. You will however let me say that I miss the strength which I would expect from your pen or speech. The message of non-violence demands the utmost strength without sting behind it.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi

Courtesy : S. Radhakrishnan

Gandhi's letter to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, dated Wardha, December 28, 1940

The fourth stage of the campaign began in April. The rank-and-file members of the Congress were enrolled. The result was a sharp rise in the number of satyagrahis. By midsummer over 20,000 had been convicted, as many as 14,000 being in jail at one time. Mr. Amery said: "Congressmen in prison will have plenty of opportunities for correspondence and study. At the end of the war, they could bring forward a constructive thought-out plan."

The number of satyagrahis would have been many times larger but for the limits which Gandhi imposed on the campaign. When, in April, *Hindu* complained that the campaign had produced no appreciable impression on the war effort, Gandhi retorted that it was not intended to hamper that effort. It was a moral protest: "A token of the yearning of a political organization to achieve the freedom of 350 million people through purely non-violent effort and, therefore, to affect the future destiny of the world. An ambitious claim, but it is there. Would friends ask me, at this supreme moment in the life of the world and in my own life, to deny the faith that has sustained me for nearly half a century?"

There was widespread discontent in the country. This found expression in language of noble pathos in the message which Tagore sent out to the world on the occasion of his eightieth birthday on April 14: "It is no longer possible for me to retain any respect for that mockery of civilization, which believes in ruling by force and has no faith in freedom at all. By their miserly denial of all that is best in their civilization and by withholding true human relationship from the Indians, the English have effectively closed for us all paths to progress." This was his last message; the poet died only a few months later.

The political deadlock was resented by all the Indian parties. The Liberals, the Hindu Mahasabha, and the Muslim League were for a radical change at the Centre. "Bitterly as they differ," commented *New Statesman and Nation*, "the Congress and the Muslim League agree in exposing any pretension on our part that we rule India and combat this war with her consent." Tej Bahadur Sapru tried his best to bring about a settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League but Jinnah was adamant. The League President characterized the satyagraha campaign as an attempt to bring pressure on the British Government to concede the Congress demand. "My impression," Gandhi complained to Sapru "is that

he (Jinnah) does not want a settlement till he has so consolidated the position of the League that he can dictate his terms to all the parties concerned including the rulers."

On April 22, Mr. Amery reiterated his previous statements and referring to the satyagraha campaign, observed: "This campaign of civil disobedience by instalments has now been in progress for nearly six months. And we are now in the rank-and-file phase. The magistrates, while vindicating the law, have treated the problem with common sense, ignoring nonentities and, in many cases, imposing a fine without the option of imprisonment. This latter procedure has been so discouraging to those whose chief inducement was the prospective electioneering value of a prison sentence that Mr. Gandhi has had to announce that the payment of fine will count as an equally meritorious sacrifice in the Congress hagiology. On the whole, the movement has proceeded languidly and without evoking much interest. The whole business is as regrettable as it is irrational but the Government had and have no alternative to enforcing the law. Apart from the Congress, the Government's major policy for the constitutional future may be said to have relieved the anxieties of the various elements which compose the national structure of India."

This evoked from Gandhi a strong rejoinder on April 27:

"I have read painfully the long report of the debate in the House of Commons on India. Distress has been known to have softened people's hearts and made them mindful of facts. But Britain's distress has evidently left Mr. Amery absolutely cool and untouched. This callousness makes me more than ever confirmed in my opinion that the Congress must abide by its policy of non-violence in spite of the heavy odds facing it.

"Mr. Amery has rendered no service to Great Britain by his contemptuous disregard of the situation as it exists in India and the facts that stare one in the face. He talks glibly of the British rule having given peace to India. Did he not know what was happening in Dacca and Ahmedabad? Who was responsible for keeping the peace in these places? I hope he will not throw in my face the fact that Bengal, at any rate, has self-government. He knows what a mockery that self-government is. He knows what little power for such emergencies the toy ministers have, whether they wear the Congress label, the League label or any other.

"I ask the very pertinent question: Why has this long spell of the British rule left the people so emasculated as to disable them from standing up against a few hundred goondas? It is a humiliating spectable, more for the British than for us, to see thousands of people running away from their homes through sheer fright, because a few goondas have found a favourable atmosphere for resorting to arson, murder and loot. The first act of any government worth the name would be to teach its people the art of self-defence, but the foreign British Government had no concern about this fundamental welfare of India's citizens and so it deprived the people of the use of arms.

"All the handsome tribute that Mr. Amery pays to Indian troops falls flat on Indian soil, because, leaving aside the Congress non-violence for the time being, if India had been equipped and trained for self-defence and if India had become a voluntary ally of Great Britain, I hold that all European powers combined for destruction would not have touched Great Britain.

"Mr. Amery has insulted the Indian intelligence by reiterating *ad nauseam* that Indian political parties have but to agree among themselves and Britain will register the will of a united India. I have repeatedly shown that it has been the traditional policy of Britain to prevent parties from uniting. 'Divide and Rule' has been Britain's proud motto. It is the British statesmen who are responsible for the divisions in India's ranks and the divisions will continue so long as the British sword holds India under bondage.

"I admit there is unfortunately an unbridgeable gulf between the Congress and the Muslim League. Why do not British statesmen admit that it is after all a domestic quarrel? Let them withdraw from India and I promise that the Congress and the Muslim League and all other parties will find it to their interest to come together and devise a home-made solution for the government of India. It may not be scientific; it may not be after any western pattern; but it will be durable. It may be that before we come to that happy state of affairs, we may have to fight amongst ourselves. But if we agree not to invite the assistance of any outside power, the trouble will last perhaps a fortnight and it will not mean even one day's destruction of human heads such as goes on in Europe today, for the simple reason that thanks to the British rule we are wholly unarmed.

"Mr. Amery, in utter disregard of truth, misleads his ignorant audience that the Congress wants 'all or nothing'. Let me remind him that in order to placate the British sentiment, the Congress descended to the Poona Resolution and when at Bombay it undid the Poona Resolution, I authoritatively stated that the British Government could not at the present moment grant or declare India's independence and, that, therefore, for the time being, we should be satisfied with complete freedom of speech and pen. Was that 'all or nothing'? With Mr. Amery's state of mind, I suppose it is too much to expect him to have the elementary grace to acknowledge the studied moderation of the Congress in its desire not to embarrass the British Government whilst it is fighting for its very existence. Not having that grace, he turns the Congress moderation against it and claims that the Congress civil disobedience has fallen flat.

"It took my breath away when I read his statement about India's prosperity. I say from my experience that it is a legendary thing. India's millions are becoming progressively pauperized. They are miserably clothed and underfed. Because there is one man's rule, he is able to produce a budget of millions. But I make bold to say that it is not only no proof of the prosperity of the famishing millions, but it is proof positive that India is being ground down under the British heel. It is the duty of every Indian who knows anything about the distress of the peasantry to rise in rebellion against this autocratic rule. Fortunately for humanity, India's rebellion is a peaceful revolt and, I hope, it will be through exclusively peaceful effort that India will realize her natural destiny.

"But, I must not carry any further the painful dissection of Mr. Amery's performance. It hurts me to have to undertake even this very brief analysis of his speech. But it is so amazingly misleading that I felt I would be failing in my duty if I did not point out at least some of the most glaring discrepancies in that unfortunate utterance. Surely he could have rested content with the undisputed sway that he exercises over the destinies of over four hundred million people."

Gandhi guided the movement strictly on the principle of nonviolence and truth. There were frequent communal riots and he advised the Congressmen to form peace brigades. Mr. Munshi, who stood for violent resistance, was asked by Gandhi to resign from the

Congress and attain freedom of action unhampered by restrictions entailed by the Congress non-violence.

New restrictions became necessary under the changed conditions and Kripalani, General Secretary of the Congress, issued in June the following instructions for the guidance of the satyagrahis after consultation with Gandhi:

"(1) A released satyagrahi must seek to offer satyagraha as soon as possible. If for any reason he is unable to do so, he must apply for exemption from Mahatma Gandhi. (2) From the date on which the name of a prospective satyagrahi is forwarded to Mahatma Gandhi for sanction, he is to suspend private activities and devote himself wholly to working out one or more items of the thirteen-fold items of the constructive programme. (3) Every prospective satyagrahi is expected to keep a diary and this will be submitted to the provincial Congress committee concerned at fortnightly intervals. The permission to offer satyagraha shall be granted only to such workers who have proved their worth by their everyday work. (4) The new restrictions in passing lists of satyagrahis are considered necessary in the interest of the struggle as it is likely to develop in future and will become progressively more arduous. If any satyagrahi who has enrolled himself on the original basis feels unable to accept the new terms, he is free to withdraw his name and there will be no disgrace attached to any such withdrawal. He may continue to render whatever other service he can to the country. He remains a Congressman as before. (5) Enrolled satyagrahis cannot contest elections to the local bodies. As satyagrahis, they cannot be in both the places. (6) No released satyagrahi who is a member of a local board, unless specially exempted by Mahatma Gandhi, can attend its meeting. (7) Unarrested satyagrahis who are touring in their districts and those whose names have been approved are not to attend meetings of the local bodies. (8) During the monsoons a satyagrahi may, if necessary, establish himself in a village, not his own, or group of villages and carry on satyagraha and constructive activities. (9) Unarrested satyagrahis who, either touring in their districts or marching in the direction of Delhi, should send fortnightly reports of their work to the provincial office. The provincial Congress committees will send a consolidated report of their work to the A.-I.C.C. office at stated intervals, fortnightly or monthly. (10) Complaints have been received about the intemperance of

language of certain satyagrahis. The satyagrahis should know that vituperation and abuse are against both the spirit and the letter of satyagraha and must, therefore, be invariably avoided."

In mid-June, the international situation suddenly changed when Germany invaded Russia. In July, the expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council and the formation of a National Defence Council were announced. The object of the move was ostensibly to secure wider participation by Indian leaders in the administration of the Central Government and in the war efforts. Gandhi did not find anything hopeful in these measures. "The announcement," Gandhi stated, "does not affect the stand taken by the Congress, nor does it meet the Congress demands." In the meantime, the Atlantic Charter was in the air but Churchill made it clear that this charter had no application to India. "At the Atlantic meeting we had in mind primarily the extension of the sovereignty, self-government and national life of the states and nations of Europe now under Nazi yoke. The joint declaration does not qualify in any way the various statements of policy which have been made from time to time about the development of constitutional Government in India, Burma or other parts of British Empire."

Gandhi ignored all such statements. "I sincerely believe", he observed, "that my silence is much more eloquent than any words that I may utter. After all, action is all in all. My action is before all India and, if you like, the whole world."

The general enthusiasm for the individual satyagraha campaign was waning by October. Few of the released prisoners had courted re-arrest as Gandhi had expected them to do. Some of the leaders were known to desire an end to the campaign, and more appeals were made to Gandhi. But the veteran satyagrahi, now seventy-two, held his ground.

At Sevagram, on October 2, when three crore yards of yarn and a purse of Rs.12,000 were presented to Gandhi, he said:

"I had always believed that the country's faith in the utility of khaddar will increase with experience, but incorrigible optimist as I am, even I was not prepared for the response that I have got this year from all parts of the country and more particularly from the jails. This unexpected response has confirmed me in the hope that the cause for which we stand is bound to triumph. Some constantly keep asking me of what avail will the present struggle be.

It is making no impression on the Government. My answer is that I am quite satisfied with the present pace of the movement. I don't want to increase its pace just yet. Nor that it will never increase but it will develop along its own line according to the law of non-violence. If people want miracle to happen immediately, it is not possible. Non-violence is an attribute of the Almighty whose ways of fulfilling Himself are inscrutable."

October 17, 1941 marked the first anniversary of the inauguration of the individual satyagraha campaign. Besides the satyagrahis, thousands of detenus were rotting in prisons under the Defence of India Rules. The Government sprang a surprise by publishing certain documents which Jayaprakash Narayan tried to smuggle out of prison. "If the motive," commented Gandhi, "was to discredit the organization of which Jayaprakash Narayan is a distinguished member, it must fail. Assuming the correctness of the charge against Jayaprakash Narayan, the method advocated by him is against the policy of truth and non-violence adopted by the Congress and deserves the severest condemnation. But it ill becomes the Government to condemn or discredit it. Frankly, all nationalist forces, no matter by what name they are described, are at war with Government. And, according to the accepted cannon of war, the method adopted by Jayaprakash Narayan is perfectly legitimate. One word to Congressmen. While Jayaprakash Narayan remains the patriot we have known him, we must realize that his method is harmful in the extreme, while a non-violent struggle is going on. No underhand or underground movement can ever become a mass movement or stir millions to mass action."

In a statement issued at the end of October, Gandhi said:

"I have been chary of issuing statements for the guidance of the satyagrahis. The deciding reason has been to have them to be self-guided where they are not guided by local leaders. But this chariness can easily be overdone. Time seems to have arrived for a brief review especially as several leaders who have been discharged have met me and there has been much speculation about the trend or the result of these talks. The public should know that those who were not whole-heartedly with the Bombay resolution have come out with their doubts confirmed. Similarly, those who never had any doubts have become firmer than ever before in their opinion. As for me, I never had any doubt as to the correctness of the Bombay

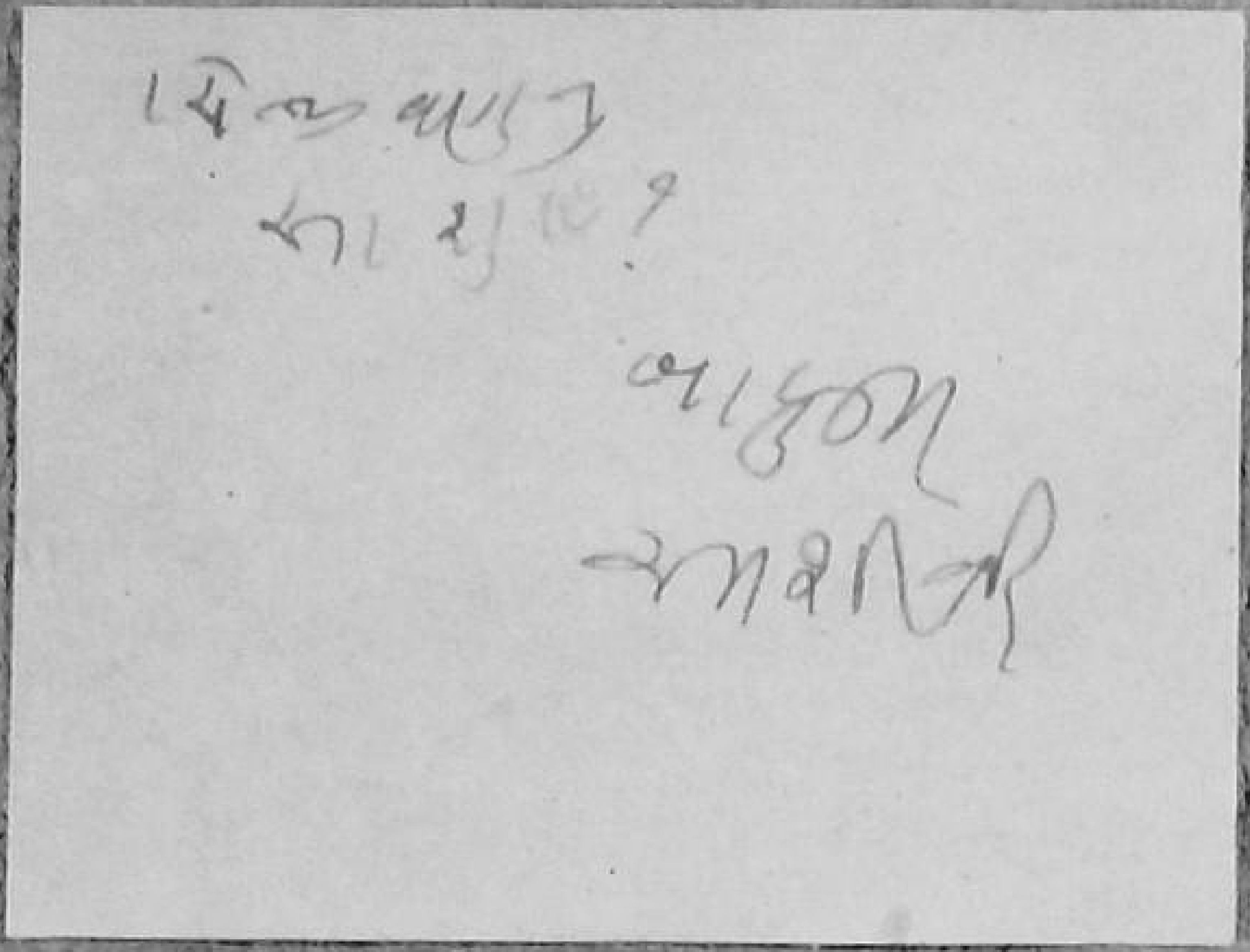
resolution and have none about the correctness of the steps taken hitherto in pursuance thereof."

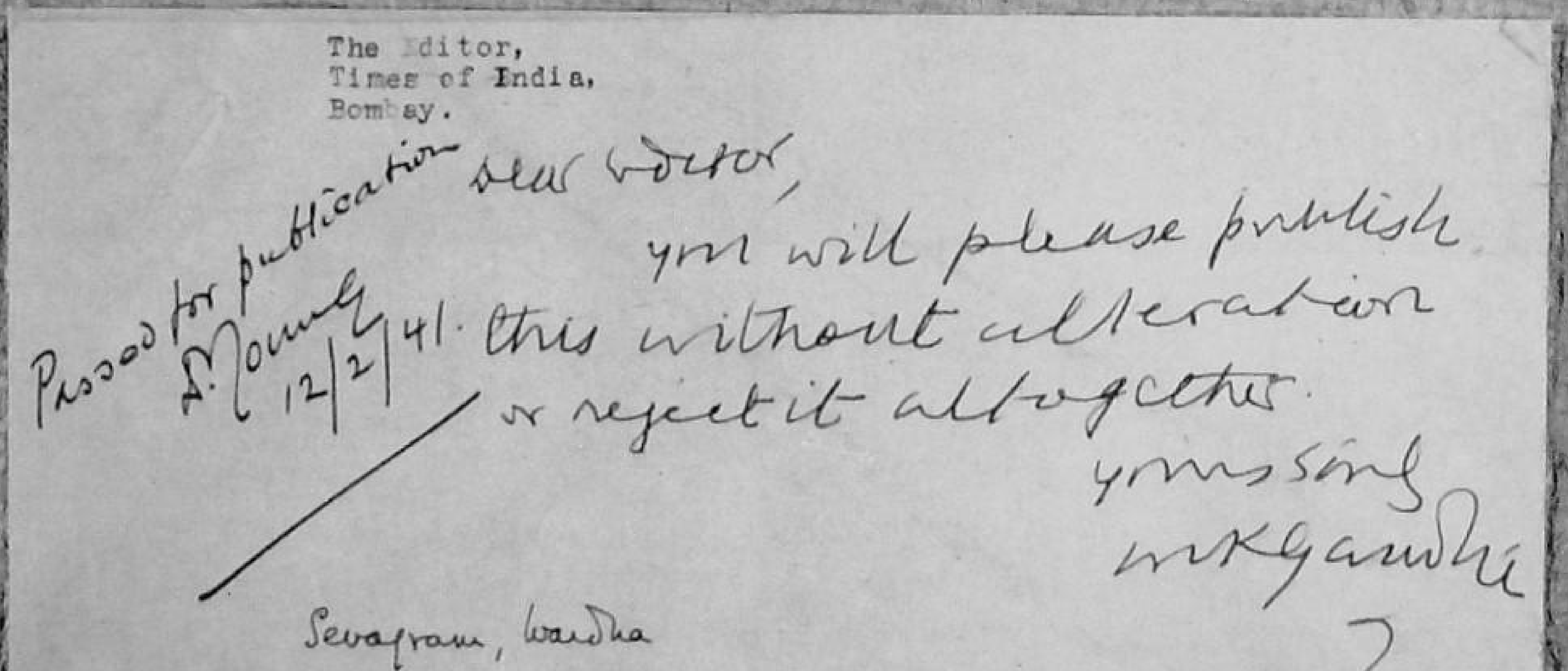
Gandhi observed that satyagraha must neither be expanded into a mass movement, as some desired, since mass action during the war would embarrass the Government and "at this stage without communal unity is an invitation to civil war", nor must it be abandoned. It did not matter how few the satyagrahis might be; if there were only ten or two, they would represent the whole of the Congress. "Does not one ambassador represent his people?" asked Gandhi. "To give up civil disobedience would be folly. Civil disobedience in the present case meant the assertion of the right to speak against participation in this war or all war. If we cannot do even this much when the occasion demands it, we might as well give up non-violence. Civil disobedience is an assertion of a right which law should give but it denies. If performance of a duty causes embarrassment, it cannot be helped. The authority can easily avoid embarrassment by recognizing the elementary right of free speech."

He denied that satyagraha was a policy of passive inaction. He asked Congressmen to press on with constructive programme with which civil disobedience had been coupled from the outset. As to his leadership, he wrote, "The bond between Congressmen and me seems unbreakable". He expressed the hope that "they will some day fulfil all my conditions and find themselves in enjoyment of full independence such as has never before been seen on earth."

In November, Mr. Amery made two statements and said: "We should be proud of our contribution to India. But above all, there is goodwill between the Indians themselves." He characterized the extension of the Viceroy's Executive Council as a great step in advance. In reply Gandhi said: "Mr. Amery has said nothing new. He does not know India as well as I do. Therefore, I see that by repeating his statement, he is doing no good either to his own country or to India. His repeating the same untruths would not convert untruth to truth."

By the late autumn of 1941, it had become obvious that something must be done quickly to improve Indian political situation and enlist the full co-operation of the people in the war. Germany was advancing steadily into Russia and a German drive through the Near East was expected. Japan had consolidated her position in Indo-China, and was preparing for a final plunge in the war. The





The Editor,
Times of India,
Bombay.

Passed for publication
F. Moraes
12/2/41.

Dear Editor,

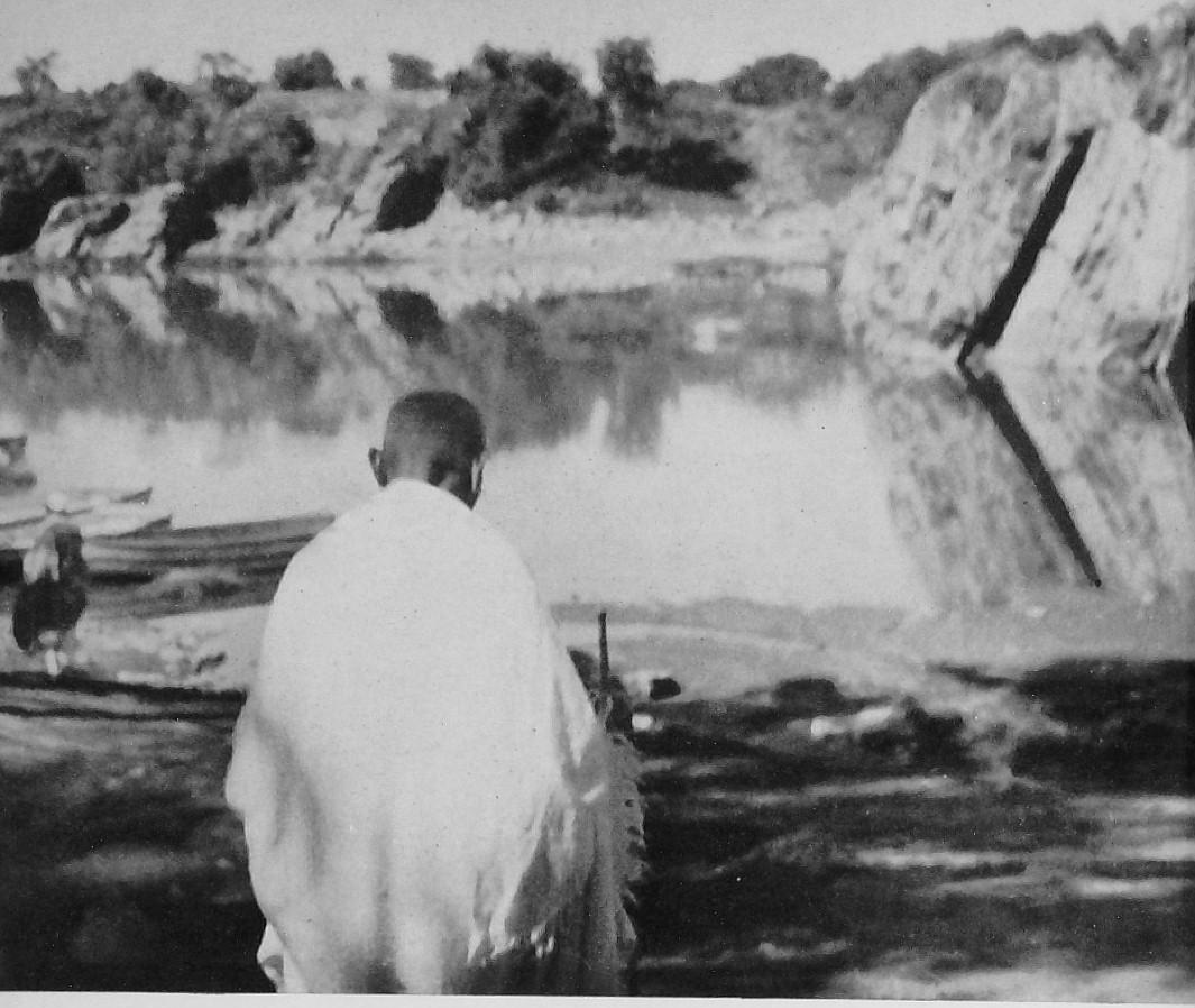
you will please publish this without alteration or reject it altogether.

yours sincerely
M K Gandhi

Sevagram, Wardha
10. 2. 41.

Gandhi's shortest letter in Gujarati—" What is this ? "—addressed to Jivanji Desai *Courtesy : Jivanji Desai*

Gandhi's covering letter to the editor of *Times of India,* dated Sevagram, February 10, 1941 *Courtesy : Frank Moraes*



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

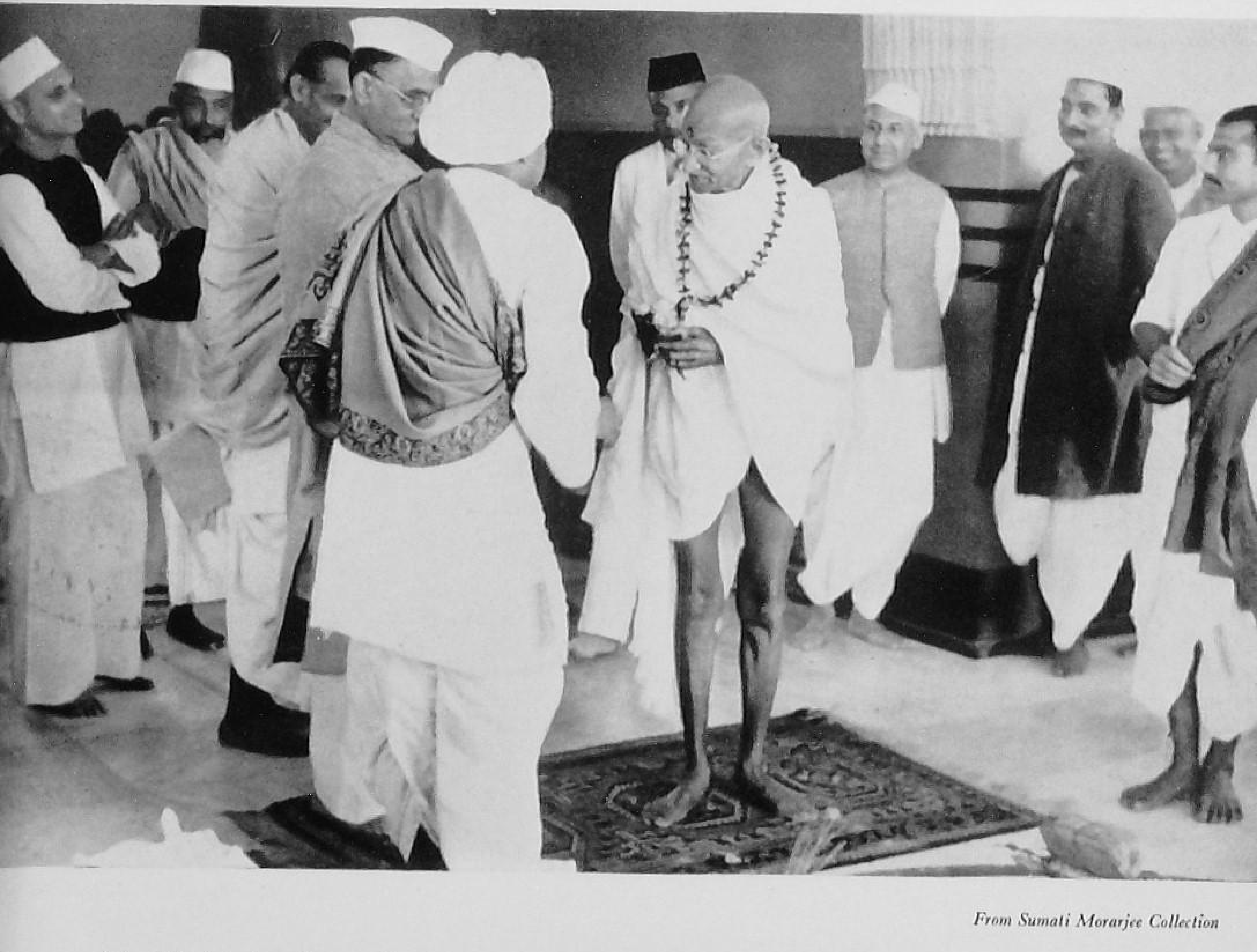
Gandhi's visit to the Marble Rocks at Jubbulpore, February 1941

Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi shielding himself from the sun's strong rays during his journey by boat on the Narbada, February 1941

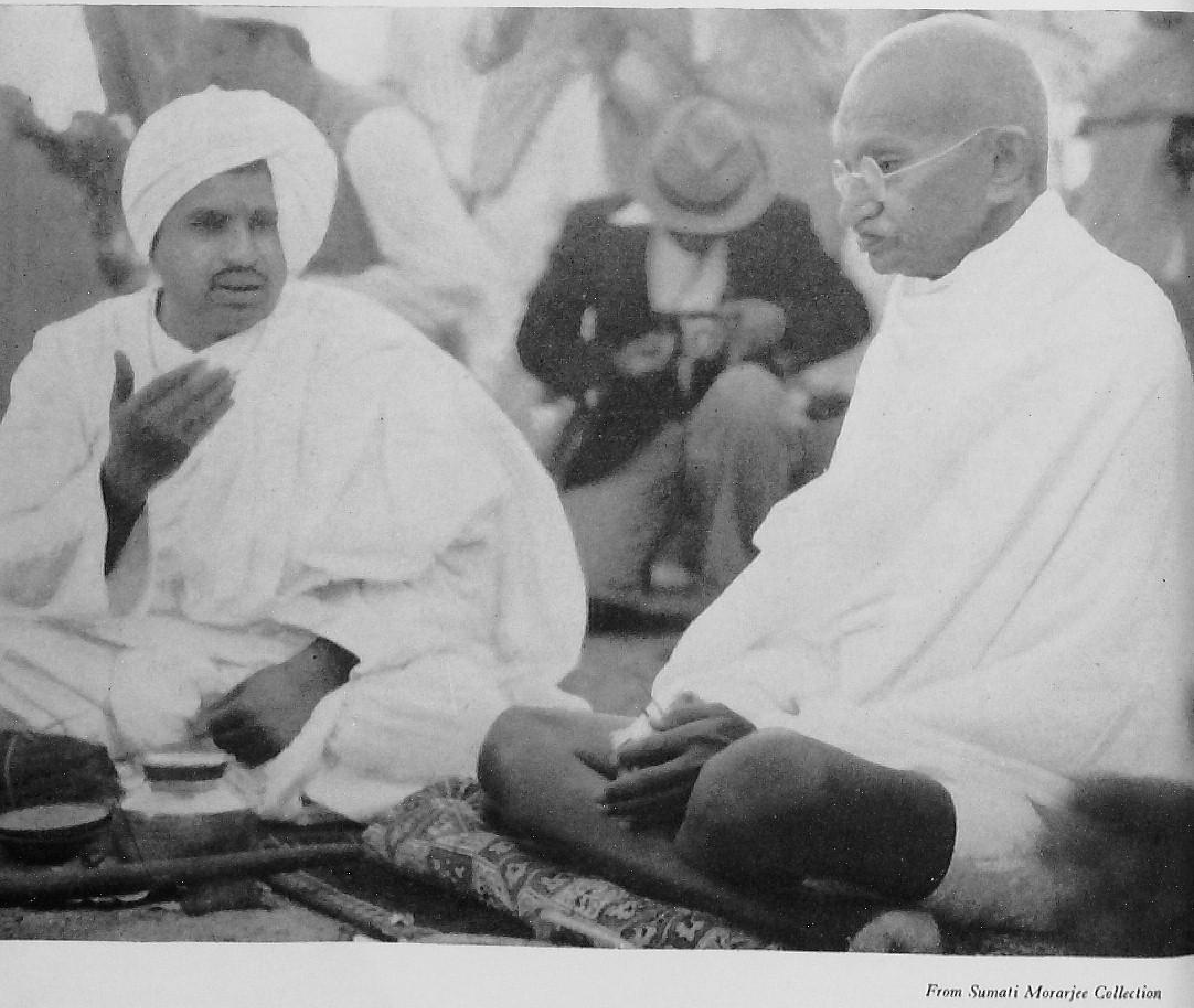
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

From a moving train Gandhi collects money for the Harijan Fund on his way to Allahabad, February 1941



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi with the priests on the occasion of the opening ceremony of Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital, Allahabad, February 28, 1941



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi at the religious ceremony, Allahabad, February 28, 1941

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi speaking on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital, Allahabad, February 28, 1941

Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi opening the main door of the Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital, Allahabad, February 28, 1941

mobilization of India's vast resources and man-power had become urgent military necessity.

On the eve of the Pearl Harbour debacle, the British Government made a conciliatory gesture. On December 3, the following communique was issued:

"The Government of India, confident in the determination of all responsible opinion in India to support the war effort until victory is secured, have reached the conclusion that the civil disobedience prisoners whose offences have been formal or symbolic in character can be set free including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad."

Gandhi, in a press interview, stated:

"As I said before the event, I must repeat after the event, that so far as I am concerned, it cannot evoke a single responsive or appreciative chord in me.

"From my student days onwards, I have been and still claim to be a friend of the British people. But my friendship cannot blind me to feel that the British representatives hold India as a bond slave. All the freedom that India enjoys is the freedom of the slave and not the freedom of the equal, which is otherwise known as Complete Independence.

"Mr. Amery's pronouncements do not soothe the pestering sore but they are like sprinkling chillies on it. It is in that setting that I am called upon to examine the release.

"If the Government of India are confident in their determination of all responsible opinion in India to support war effort, the logical conclusion would be to keep civil disobedience prisoners in their custody, because they produce a jarring note. The only meaning I can attach to release, therefore, is that they expect that prisoners will have a change of their opinions in their self-invited solitude. I am hoping that the Government will be soon disillusioned.

"Civil disobedience was not taken up without most careful consideration. It was certainly not taken up out of any vindictiveness. It was taken up, and I hope, will be continued, in order to make good and vindicate the claim of the Congress to let the British and the world know that there is at the very least a large body of public opinion represented by the Congress which is utterly opposed to the participation in war, not because it wishes any disaster to British arms, or victory to the Nazis or fascist arms, but because it sees no

deliverance from blood-guiltiness either for the victors or the vanquished, and certainly no deliverance for India out of this war.

"The Congress which seeks and claims to represent the dumb millions, had for the past twenty years accepted non-violence as its unbroken policy to achieve India's independence. To stop civil disobedience, symbolic though it may be, for the time being, will be to deny its policy at the crucial moment.

"The Government claim that in spite of Congress efforts, they are able to get all men and money from India. Therefore, Congress opposition in this estimate can only be a moral effort and moral demonstration. I for one am entirely satisfied with it, because I am convinced that from that moral demonstration will arise, when the moment comes, a demonstration which will result in attainment of India's independence, not ascendency of this party or that.

"The Congress struggle covers every single unit in India and now that the Congress President is expected to be out, it will be for him to consider whether and when to call the Congress Working Committee or the A.-I.C.C. These two bodies will determine the future policy of the Congress. I am but a humble instrument of service in conducting civil disobedience.

"I would, however, say one word about the detenus and other prisoners. It sounds strange that those who have sought imprisonment are to be discharged and not those who are either detained without trial or imprisoned because they held the freedom of their country dearer than their personal liberty. There is surely something utterly wrong somewhere. I, therefore, cannot rejoice over the Government of India's decision."

During the fourteen months, over 25,000 satyagrahis were jailed. On December 4, the general release commenced throughout India. Gandhi's reaction to the releases and his views on the future Congress policy were embodied in his statement of December 7:

"The jail delivery that is going on apace of satyagrahis must be taken as a challenge to convene a meeting of the A.-I.C.C. which, the Government of India have been evidently induced to expect, will reverse the Bombay decision whose working is reflected in my conduct of the satyagraha campaign. I have, therefore, advised the Maulana Saheb to convene a meeting of the Working Committee and the A.-I.C.C. at an early date, but until that decision is reversed, civil disobedience has to continue. I must admit, however,

that the conduct of the campaign has been rendered difficult by the Government action in discharging civil disobedience prisoners, but if we are to reach our goal, we have to cut our way through every difficulty. This one is nothing compared to what we likely are to have to face before we come into our own. If the A.-I.C.C. meeting is to come, as it must, pending the meeting, the members of the Working Committee and the A.-I.C.C. must not offer civil disobedience, nor should those who are interested in reversing the Bombay decision. Apart from these, civil disobedience should continue without interruption. Of course, it will stand suspended on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

"The question naturally arises whether civil disobedience is to be offered in the usual manner by reciting the prescribed formula or in some other manner. I like the formula method. It gives directness and symmetry to the movement. There is great power in the reciting of the same formula in the same manner. It rivets the attention of the masses and men on identical themes. The formula is not a mean thing. It is a protest of the nation against war as an arbitrator. It is a message of peace on earth and goodwill towards mankind. What is individual formula today will become, in due time, that of the masses, but the authorities having discharged the symbolical satyagrahis may refuse to re-arrest them for reciting slogans. There are then two ways open to us: If they do not re-arrest, there need be no dismay and demoralization, the jail is not the objective. The freedom of speech is the immediate objective. If recitation is not objected to, we have advanced somewhat towards our objective and it will be foolish to court imprisonment for the sake of it. Dismay and demoralization arise because Congressmen in general have not realized the inevitable connection between the constructive programme and civil disobedience, and civil disobedience without the backing of the constructive programme never can lead us to independence. Shorn of it, civil disobedience becomes a method of violence bound to prove ineffective in the end. Moreover, civil disobedience, even when it is mass, will only be offered by those who are bodily fit, whereas the constructive programme is for all and will never be suspended if the whole nation took it up in earnest. It is enough to give us Complete Independence.

"Prosecution of the constructive programme means constructing structure of swaraj. The whole theme of corporate non-violence,

as I have conceived it, falls to pieces if there is no living faith in the constructive programme. To my mind, swaraj based on non-violence is the fulfilment of the constructive programme; hence, whether the authorities jail us or not, we must, pursue the constructive programme.

"I have been asked whether the discharged satyagrahis should hold or attend meetings and deliver speeches. They should do so. I don't want or expect them to re-offer civil disobedience immediately. That would be indecent haste but ordinary civil disobedience may go on. For the discharged ones let there be breathing time. Let them address meetings in their constituencies and study things at the meetings. They will expound their views on the general situation and not hesitate to interpret the anti-war Congress policy.

"The symbolic satyagraha has a definite meaning, but it is open to the authorities to arrest Congressmen for their speeches, even if they do not intend thereby to offer civil disobedience. That was how they had arrested the Maulana Saheb and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, not to mention the lesser lights. Let it be known that I have no authority to suspend civil disobedience on extraneous grounds. That is for the Congress to do. For me personally there is no choice. As a man sworn to peace at this critical moment, to suspend my anti-war activity would be to deny myself. And therefore, for all those who think like me, whether we are misunderstood or worse befalls, we must express our faith through our action, hoping thereby that ultimately our way will be accepted by all warring powers as the only escape from a blood bath which is reducing man to his lowest depth."

Constructive Programme

1941

On December 8, 1941 Gandhi arrived in Bardoli to spend a month in the Sardar's ashram, a garden farm. There came daily some two hundred workers to discuss their problems. In mid-December Gandhi issued a 25-page booklet, *Constructive Programme*, an original contribution on "its meaning and place", for the achievement of "non-violent independence". It was written by Gandhi in the train from Sevagram to Bardoli. It filled the void created by the suspension of *Harijan*. "If it makes no appeal to the Congressmen," he wrote, "I must be rejected. For my handling of civil disobedience without the constructive programme will be like a paralysed hand attempting to lift a spoon."

In the introductory to *Constructive Programme*, Gandhi wrote:

"The constructive programme may otherwise and more fittingly be called construction of Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence by truthful and non-violent means.

"Effort for construction of independence so called through violent, and, therefore, necessarily untruthful means, we know only too painfully. Look at the daily destruction of property, life and truth in the present war.

"Complete Independence through truth and non-violence means independence of every unit, be it the humblest of the nation, without distinction of race, colour or creed. This independence is never exclusive. It is, therefore, wholly compatible with inter-dependence within or without. The practice will always fall short of the theory, even as the drawn line falls short of the theoretical line of Euclid. Therefore, Complete Independence will be complete only to the extent of our approach in practice to truth and non-violence.

"Let the reader mentally plan out the whole of the constructive programme, and he will agree with me that if it could be successfully worked out, the end of it would be the independence we want.

Has not Mr. Amery said that an agreement between the major parties, translated in my language, any agreement after communal unity which is only one item in the constructive programme, will be respected? We need not question his sincerity, for if such unity is honestly, that is, non-violently, attained, it will in itself contain the power to compel acceptance of the agreed demand.

"On the other hand, there is no such thing as an imaginary or even perfect definition of independence through violence. For, it presupposes only the ascendancy of that party of the nation which makes the most effective use of violence. In it, the perfect equality, economic or otherwise, is inconceivable.

"But, for my purpose, which is to convince the reader of the necessity of following out the constructive programme in the non-violent effort, the acceptance of my argument about the ineffectiveness of violence for the attainment of independence is not required. The reader is welcome to the belief that the independence of the humblest unit is possible under a scheme of violence, if the effort enables him also to admit that it is a certainty through the complete execution of the programme by the nation."

His pointed examination of the thirteen items of the constructive programme was as follows:

"1. Communal unity: Everybody is agreed about the necessity of this unity. But everybody does not know that unity does not mean a mere political unity which may be imposed. It does, however, mean an unbreakable heart unity. And the first thing essential for achieving such unity is for every Congressman, whatever his religion may be, to represent in his own person Hindu, Musalman, Christian, Zoroastrian, Jew, etc., shortly, every Hindu and non-Hindu. He has to feel his identity with every one of the millions of the inhabitants of Hindustan. In order to realize this, every Congressman will cultivate personal friendship with persons representing faiths other than his own. He should have the same regard for the other faiths as he has for his own.

"In such a happy state of things, there would be no disgraceful cry at the stations such as 'Hindu water' and 'Muslim water' or 'Hindu tea' and 'Muslim tea'. There would be no separate rooms or pots for Hindus and non-Hindus in the schools and colleges, no communal schools and colleges and hospitals. The beginning of such a revolution has to be made by the Congressmen without any

political motive behind the correct conduct. Political unity will be its natural fruit.

"The implication of such heart unity may seem startling, though it is the logical necessity. Congressmen cannot aim at parliamentary power in opposition to persons of other faiths. Congressmen, therefore, will refrain, so long as these differences last, from entering the parliamentary arena.

"We have long been accustomed to think that power comes only through the legislative assemblies. I have regarded this belief as a grave error brought about by inertia or hypnotism. A superficial study of the British history has made us think that all power percolates to the people from parliaments. The truth is that power resides in the people and it is entrusted for the time being to those whom they may choose as their representatives. The parliaments have no power or even existence independently of the people. It has been my effort for the last twenty-one years to convince the people of this simple truth. Civil disobedience is the storehouse of power. Imagine a whole people unwilling to conform to the laws of the legislature and prepared to suffer the consequences of non-compliance! They will bring the whole legislative and the executive machinery to a standstill. The police and the military are of use to coerce minorities however powerful they may be. But no police or military coercion can bend the resolute will of a people, out for suffering to the uttermost.

"And parliamentary procedure is good only when its members are willing to conform to the will of the majority. In other words, it is fairly effective only among compatibles.

"Here in India, we have been pretending to work the parliamentary system under the separate electorates which have created artificial incompatibles. We can never bring about a living unity out of these artificial entities being brought together on a common platform. Such legislatures may function. But they can be a platform only for wrangling and sharing the crumbs of power that may fall from rulers, whoever they may be. These rule with a rod of iron, and prevent the opposing elements from flying at one another's throats. I hold the emergence of Complete Independence to be an impossibility out of such a disgrace.

"2. Removal of untouchability: At this time of the day, it is unnecessary to dilate upon the necessity of the removal of this blot

and this curse upon Hinduism. The Congressmen have certainly done much in this matter. But I am sorry to have to say that many Congressmen have looked upon this item as a mere political necessity and not something indispensable, so far as the Hindus are concerned, for the very existence of Hinduism. If the Hindu Congressmen take up the cause for its own sake, they will influence the so-called sanatanists far more extensively than they have hitherto done. They should approach them not in a militant spirit, but, as befits their non-violence, in a spirit of friendliness. And so far as the Harijans are concerned, every Hindu should make common cause with them and befriend them in their awful isolation—such isolation as perhaps the world has never seen in the monstrous immensity one witnesses in India. I know from experience how difficult the task is. But it is part of the task of building the edifice of swaraj. And the road to swaraj is steep and narrow. There are many slippery ascents and many deep chasms. They have all to be negotiated with unfaltering step before we can reach the summit and breathe the fresh air of freedom.

"3. Prohibition: Although like communal unity and removal of untouchability it has been on the Congress programme since 1920, Congressmen have not taken the interest they might have taken in this very vital social and moral reform. If we are to reach our goal through non-violent effort, we may not leave to the future government the fate of lakhs of men and women who are labouring under the curse of drink and drugs.

"Medical men can make a most effective contribution towards the removal of this evil. They have to discover ways of weaning the drunkard and opium-addict from the curse.

"Women and students have a special opportunity in advancing this reform. By many acts of loving service, they can acquire on the addicts a hold which will compel them to listen to the appeal to give up the evil habit.

"The Congress committees can open recreation booths where the tired labourer will rest his limbs, get healthy cheap refreshments, and find suitable games. All this work is fascinating and uplifting. The non-violent approach to swaraj is a novel approach. In it, the old values give place to new. In the violent way such reforms find no place. Believers in that way, in their impatience and, shall I say, ignorance, put off such things to the day of deliverance. They

forget that lasting and healthy deliverance comes from within, that is, from self-purification.

"4. Khadi: Khadi is a controversial subject. Many people think that in advocating khadi I am sailing against a head wind and am sure to sink the ship of swaraj, that I am taking the country to the Dark Ages. I don't propose to argue the case for khadi in this brief survey. I have argued it sufficiently before. Here I want to show what every Congressman and every Indian, can do to advance the cause of khadi. It connotes the beginning of the economic freedom and equality of all in the country. 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating.' Let everyone try, and he or she will find out for himself or herself the truth of what I am saying. Khadi must be taken with all its implications. It means a wholesale swadeshi mentality, a determination to find all the necessaries of life in India, and that too through the labour and intellect of the villagers. That means a reversal of the existing process. That is to say that, instead of half a dozen cities of India and Britain living on the exploitation and ruin of the 700,000 villages of India, the latter will be largely self-contained, and will voluntarily serve the cities of India and even the outside world in so far as it benefits both the parties.

"This needs a revolutionary change in the mentality and tastes of many. Easy though the non-violent way is in many respects, it is very difficult in many others. It vitally touches the life of every single Indian, makes him feel aglow with the possession of a power that has lain hidden within himself, and makes him proud of his identity with every drop of the ocean of Indian humanity. This non-violence is not the inanity which we have mistaken it for through all these long ages, but it is the most potent force as yet known to mankind and on which its very existence is dependent. It is that force which I have tried to present to the Congress and through it to the world. Khadi to me is the symbol of unity of the Indian humanity, of its economic freedom and equality and, therefore, ultimately, in the poetic expression of Jawaharlal Nehru, 'the livery of India's freedom'.

"But the khadi mentality means the decentralization of the production and the distribution of the necessaries of life. Therefore, the formula so far evolved is, every village to produce and use all its necessaries and, in addition, to produce a certain percentage as its contribution to the requirements of the cities.

"Heavy industries will necessarily be centralized and nationalized. But they will occupy the least part of the vast national activity in the villages.

"Having shown the implication of khadi, I must indicate what Congressmen can and should do towards its promotion. Production of khadi includes cotton growing, picking, ginning, cleaning, carding, slivering, spinning, sizing, dyeing, preparing the warp and the woof, weaving, and washing. These, with the exception of dyeing, are essential processes. Every one of them can be effectively handled in the villages and is being so handled in many villages throughout India which the A.-I.S.A. is covering. According to the latest report, the following are the interesting figures: 275,146 villagers, including 19,645 Harijans and 57,378 Muslims, scattered in over 13,451 villages, received, as spinners, weavers, etc., Rs. 3,385,609 in 1940. The spinners were largely women.

"Yet the work done is only one-hundredth part of what could be done, if Congressmen honestly took up the khadi programme. Since the wanton destruction of this central village industry and the allied handicrafts, intelligence and brightness have fled from the villages, leaving them inane, lusterless, and reduced almost to the state of their ill-kept cattle.

"If Congressmen will be true to their Congress call in respect of khadi, they will carry out the instructions of the A.-I.S.A. issued from time to time as to the part they can play in khadi planning. But I lay down here certain general rules:

"(1) Every family with a plot of ground can grow cotton at least for family use. Cotton growing is an easy process. In Bihar, the cultivators were by law compelled to grow indigo on three-twentieth of their cultivable land. This was in the interest of the foreign indigo planter. Why cannot we grow cotton voluntarily for the nation on a certain portion of our land? The reader will note that the decentralization commences from the beginning of the khadi processes. Today, the cotton crop is centralized and has to be sent to the distant parts of India, and before the war used to be sent principally to Great Britain and Japan. It was and still is a money crop subject, therefore, to the fluctuations of the market. Under the khadi scheme, cotton growing becomes free from this uncertainty and gamble. The grower grows what he needs. The farmer needs to know that his first business is to grow for his own needs. When

the farmer does that he will reduce the chance of a low market ruining him.

"(II) Every spinner would buy—if he has not his own—enough cotton for ginning, which he can easily do without the handginning roller frame. He can gin his own portion with a board and an iron rolling-pin. Where this is considered impracticable, hand-ginned cotton should be bought and carded. Carding for self can be done well on a tiny bow without much effort. The greater the decentralization of labour, the simpler and cheaper the tools. The slivers made, the process of spinning commences. I strongly recommend the *dhanush takli*. I have of late been mainly using it. My speed is almost the same as on the wheel. I draw a finer thread on the *takli*, and the strength and evenness of the yarn are greater than on the wheel. This may not, however, hold good for all. My emphasis on the *dhanush takli* is based on the fact that it is easily made, it is very cheap and does not require repairs like the wheel. Unless one knows how to make the two *mals* and to adjust them when they slip or to put the wheel right when it refuses to work, the wheel has often to lie idle. Moreover, if the millions take to spinning at once, as they well may have to even under the stress of war, the *dhanush takli*, being the instrument most easily made and handled, is the only tool that can meet the demand. It is more easily made even than the simple *takli*. Imagine the unifying and educative effect of the whole nation simultaneously taking part in the processes up to spinning! Consider the levelling effect of the bond of common labour between the rich and the poor!

"Yarn thus produced may be used in three ways: by presenting it to the A.-I.S.A. for the sake of the poor, by having it woven for personal use, or by getting as much khadi for it as it can give. It is clear enough that the finer and better the yarn, the greater will be its value. If Congressmen will put their hearts into the work, they will make improvements in the tools and make many discoveries. In our country there has been a divorce between labour and intelligence. The result has been stagnation. If there is an indissoluble marriage between the two, and that in the manner here suggested, the resultant good will be inestimable.

"In this scheme of nation-wide spinning as a sacrifice, I do not expect the average man or the average woman to give more than one hour daily to this work.

"5. Other village industries: These stand on a different footing from khadi. There is not much scope for voluntary labour in them. Each village industry will take the labour of only a certain number of hands. These industries come in as a handmaid to khadi. They cannot exist without khadi, and khadi will be robbed of its dignity without them. Village economy cannot be complete without the essential village industries, such as hand-grinding, hand-pounding, soap-making, paper-making, match-making, tanning, oil-pressing, etc. Congressmen can interest themselves in these and, if they are villagers or will settle down in the villages, they will give these industries a new life and a new dress. All should make it a point of honour to use only the village articles, whenever and wherever available. Given the demand, there is no doubt that most of our wants can be supplied from our villages. When we have become village-minded, we will not want imitations of the West or machine-made products, but we will develop a true national taste in keeping with the vision of a new India in which pauperism, starvation and idleness will be unknown.

"6. Village sanitation: Divorce between intelligence and labour has resulted in criminal negligence of the villages. And so, instead of having graceful hamlets dotting the land, we have dung-heaps. The approach to many villages is not a refreshing experience. Often one would like to shut one's eyes and stuff one's nose, such is the surrounding dirt and offending smell. If the majority of Congressmen are derived from our villages as they should be, they should be able to make our villages models of cleanliness in every sense of the word. But they have never considered it their duty to identify themselves with the villagers in their daily lives. A sense of national or social sanitation is not a virtue among us. We may take a kind of bath, but we do not mind dirtying the well or tank or river by whose side or in which we perform ablutions. I regard this defect as a great vice which is responsible for the disgraceful state of our villages and the sacred banks of the sacred rivers and for the diseases that spring from insanitation.

"7. New or Basic Education: This is a new subject. But the members of the Congress Working Committee felt so much interested in it that they gave a charter to the organizers of Hindustani Talimi Sangh which has been functioning since the Haripura Congress session. This is a big field of work for many Congressmen. This

education is meant to transform village children into model villagers. It is principally designed for them. The inspiration for it has come from the villages. Congressmen who want to build up the structure of swaraj from its very foundation dare not neglect the children. Foreign rule has unconsciously, though none the less surely, begun with the children in the field of education. The primary education is a farce designed without regard to the wants of the India of the villages and, for that matter, even of the cities. Basic education links the children, whether of the cities or of the villages, to all that is best and lasting in India. It develops both the body and the mind, and keeps the child rooted to the soil with a glorious vision of the future in the realization of which he or she begins to take his or her career in school. Congressmen would find it of absorbing interest benefiting themselves equally with the children they come in contact with. Let those who wish put themselves in touch with the secretary of the sangh at Sevagram.

"8. Adult education: This has been woefully neglected by Congressmen. Where they have not neglected it, they have been satisfied with teaching the illiterates to read and write. If I had charge of adult education, I should begin with opening the minds of the adult pupils to the greatness and the vastness of their country. The villager's India is contained in his village. If he goes to another village, he talks of his own village as his own home. Hindustan is for him a geographical term. We have no notion of the ignorance prevailing in the villages. The villagers know nothing of the foreign rule and its evils. What little knowledge they have picked up fills them with the awe the foreigner inspires and their helplessness. The result is the dread and hatred of the foreigner and his rule. They do not know how to get rid of it. They do not know that the foreigner's presence is due to their own weaknesses and their ignorance of the power they possess to rid themselves of the foreign rule. My adult education means, therefore, first true political education of the adult by word of mouth. Seeing that this will be mapped out, it can be given without fear. I imagine that it is too late in the day for authority to interfere with this type of education, but if there is an interference, there must be a fight for this elementary right without which there can be no swaraj. Of course, in all I have written, openness has been assumed. Non-violence abhors fear and, therefore, secrecy. Side by side with the education by

the mouth will be the literary education. This is itself a speciality. Many methods are being tried in order to shorten the period of education. A board of temporary or permanent experts may be appointed by the Working Committee to give shape to the idea here adumbrated and guide the workers. I admit that what I have said in this paragraph only points the way but does not tell the average Congressman how to go about it. Nor is every Congressman fitted for this highly special work. But Congressmen who are teachers should find no difficulty in laying down a course in keeping with the suggestions made herein.

"9. Uplift of women: I have included the uplift of women in the constructive programme, for though satyagraha has automatically brought India's women out from their darkness, as nothing else could have in such an incredibly short space of time, Congressmen have not felt the call to see that women become the equal partners in the fight for swaraj. They have not realized that woman must be the true helpmate of man in the mission of service. Woman has been suppressed under custom and law for which she has no hand. In a plan of life based on non-violence, woman has as much right to shape her own destiny, as man has to shape his. But as every right in a non-violent society proceeds from the previous performance of a duty, it follows that the rules of social conduct must be framed by mutual co-operation and consultation. They can never be imposed from outside. Men have not yet realized this truth in fulness in their behaviour towards women. They have considered themselves to be lords and masters of women instead of considering them as their friends and co-workers. It is the privilege of Congressmen to give the women of India a lifting hand. Women are in the position somewhat of the slave of old, who did not know that he could or ever had to be free. And when freedom came, for the moment, he felt helpless. Women have been taught to regard themselves as slaves of men. It is up to Congressmen to see that they enable the women to realize their full status and play their part as equals of men.

"This revolution is easy, if the mind is made up. Let Congressmen begin with their own homes. Wives should not be dolls and objects of indulgence, but should be treated as honoured comrades in common service. To this end, those who have not received a liberal education should receive such instruction as is possible from

their husbands. The same observation applies with the necessary changes to mothers and daughters.

"It is hardly necessary to point out that I have given a one-sided picture of the helpless state of India's women. I am quite conscious of the fact that in the villages generally they hold their own with their menfolk and in some respects they even rule them. But to the impartial outsider, the legal and customary status of woman is bad enough throughout and demands radical alteration.

"10. Education in health and hygiene: Having given a place to village sanitation, the question may be asked, why give a separate place to education in health and hygiene? It might have been bracketed with sanitation, but I did not wish to interfere with the items. Mention of mere sanitation is not enough to include health and hygiene. The art of keeping one's health and the knowledge of hygiene is by itself a separate subject of study and corresponding practice. In a well-ordered society, the citizens know and observe the laws of health and hygiene. It is established beyond doubt that ignorance and neglect of the laws of health and hygiene are responsible for the majority of diseases to which mankind is heir. The very high death rate among us is no doubt due largely to our gnawing poverty, but it could be mitigated if the people were properly educated about health and hygiene.

"*Mens sana in corpore sano* is perhaps the first law for humanity. A healthy mind in a healthy body is a self-evident truth. There is an inevitable connection between mind and body. If we were in the possession of healthy minds, we would shed all violence and, naturally obeying the laws of health, we would also have healthy bodies without an effort. I hope, therefore, that no Congressman will disregard this item of the constructive programme. The fundamental laws of health and of hygiene are simple and easily learnt. The difficulty is about their observance. Here they are: Think the purest thoughts and banish all idle and impure thought. Breathe the freshest air day and night. Establish a balance between bodily and mental work. Stand erect and sit erect, and be neat and clean in every one of your acts, and let these be an expression of your inner condition. Eat to live for service of fellow men. Do not live for indulging yourselves. Hence, your food must be just enough to keep your mind and body in good order. Man becomes what he eats. Your water, food and air must be clean, and you will not be

satisfied with mere personal cleanliness, but you will infect your surroundings with the same threefold cleanliness that you will desire for yourselves.

"11. Propaganda of *rashtrabhasha*: Our love of the English language in preference to our own mother tongue has caused a deep chasm between the educated and the politically-minded classes and the masses. The languages of India have suffered impoverishment. We flounder when we make the vain attempt to express abstruse thought in the mother tongue. There are no equivalents for the scientific terms. The result has been disastrous. The masses remain cut off from the modern mind. We are too near our own times correctly to measure the disservice caused to India by this neglect of its great languages. It is easy enough to understand that, unless we undo the mischief, the mass mind must remain imprisoned. The masses can make no solid contribution to the construction of swaraj. It is inherent in swaraj based on non-violence that every individual makes his own direct contribution to the independence movement. The masses cannot do this fully, unless they understand every step with all its implications. This is impossible, unless every step is explained in their own languages.

"And then for all-India intercourse we need, from among Indian stock, a language which the largest number of people already know and understand and which the others also can easily pick up. This language is indisputably Hindi. It is spoken and understood by both the Hindus and the Muslims of the North. It is called Urdu when it is written in the Persian character. The Congress, in its famous resolution passed at the Cawnpore session in 1925, called this all-India speech Hindustani. And since that time, in theory at least, Hindustani has been the *rashtrabhasha*. I say 'in theory' because even Congressmen have not practised it. The picture that I have drawn in this paragraph is true to life as it was before 1920. From 1920, a deliberate attempt began to be made to recognize the importance of the Indian languages for the political education of the masses, as also of an all-India common speech which the politically-minded India could easily speak and which the Congressmen from the different provinces could understand at the annual session as also at the meetings of the A.-I.C.C. But I am sorry to have to say that many Congressmen have failed to carry out the resolution. And so we have the shameful spectacle of Congressmen

insisting on speaking in English and compelling others to do likewise for their sakes. The spell that English has cast on us is not yet broken. Being under it, we are impeding the progress of India towards her goal. Our love of the masses must be skin-deep, if we will not take the trouble of spending over learning Hindustani as many months as the years we spend over learning English.

"12. Love of one's own language: I need hardly add anything to what I have said in the foregoing paragraph. The two propositions hang together for those who view India as one country.

"13. Working for economic equality: This last is the master key to non-violent independence. Working for the economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. It means the levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth on the one hand, and a levelling up of the semi-starved naked millions on the other. A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class can't last a day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day, unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good. I adhere to my doctrine of trusteeship, in spite of the ridicule that has been poured upon it. It is true that it is difficult to reach. So is non-violence difficult to attain. But we made up our minds in 1920 to negotiate that steep ascent. We have found it worth the effort.

"It involves a daily growing appreciation of the working of non-violence. It is expected of those Congressmen who make a diligent search and reason out for themselves the why and the wherefore of what they are called upon to do. They may not be satisfied with the mere conformity, honest or half-hearted, with the instructions issued from time to time. And they should ask themselves how the existing inequalities can be abolished violently or non-violently. I think we know the violent way. It has not succeeded anywhere. Some claim that it has in Russia in a large measure. I doubt it. It is too early to make an unchallengeable claim. And now that the war has broken out between Russia and Germany, we are unable to say what the ultimate result will be.

"The non-violent experiment of ours is still in the making. And we have nothing much yet to give by way of demonstration. But my observation leads me to think that the method had begun to work though ever so slowly in the direction of equality. And since non-violence is a process of conversion, the conversion, if achieved, must be permanent. A society or a nation constructed non-violently must be able to withstand attack upon its structure from without or within. We have monied Congressmen in the organization. They have to lead the way. This fight, which is conceived as the last, provides an opportunity for the closest heart-searching on the part of every individual Congressman. If ever we are to achieve equality, the foundation has to be laid now. Those who think that the major reforms will come after the advent of swaraj are deceiving themselves as to the elementary working of non-violent swaraj. It will not drop from heaven, all of a sudden, one fine morning. But it has to be built up brick by brick by corporate self-effort. We have travelled a fair way in that direction. But a much longer and weary distance has to be covered before we can behold swaraj in its glorious majesty. Every Congressman has to ask himself what he has done towards the attainment of economic equality.

"Kisans, labour and students:

"I have now finished the inquiry about the thirteen items of the constructive programme. I have attempted to show how each item fits in with the scheme of swaraj and how it can be worked by individual Congressmen. The programme is not exhaustive. Swaraj is a mighty structure. Eighty crores of hands have to work at building it. Therefore, many other items of a piece with the thirteen can be added, the centre being always the charkha round which all other activities should come from the charkha.

"The reader will notice, as some of my co-workers have noticed, the absence of any reference of kisans, factory hands or labour and students. I have deliberately avoided reference to their work as parts of the constructive programme. They have to work the thirteen items same as any other worker in the cause. My avoidance is not intended to belittle the part they can play in the movement. I am quite conscious of the great importance they have in the movement for freedom. The question underlying the inquiry is who is to organize them and how? As to labour, I am responsible for the organization of Ahmedabad labour. I am of the opinion that it

is a model for all India to copy. Its basis is non-violence, pure and simple. It has never had a setback in its career. It has gone on from strength to strength without fuss and without show. It has its hospital, its schools for the children of the mill-hands, its classes for the adults, its own printing-press and khadi *bhandar*, and its own residential quarters. Almost all the mill-hands are voters and decide the fate of elections. They came on the voters' list at the instance of the provincial Congress committee. The organization has never taken part in party politics of the Congress. It influences the municipal policy of the city. It has to its credit very successful strikes which were wholly non-violent. The millowners and labour have governed their relations largely through voluntary arbitration. If I had my way, I would regulate all the labour organizations of India after the Ahmedabad model. It has never sought to intrude itself upon the All-India Trade Union Congress and has been uninfluenced by that Congress. A time, I hope, will come when it will be possible for the All-India Trade Union Congress to accept the Ahmedabad method and have the Ahmedabad organization as a part of the All-India Union. But I am in no hurry. It will come in its own time.

"About the kisan movement too, there is, I fear, an ugly competition to use kisans for power politics. I consider it to be contrary to the non-violent method. Those who would know my method of organizing kisans may profitably study the movement in Champaran when satyagraha was tried for the first time in India with the result all India knows. It became a mass movement which remained wholly non-violent from start to finish. It affected over twenty lakhs of kisans. The struggle centred round one specific grievance which was a century old. There had been several violent revolts to get rid of the grievance. They were suppressed. The non-violent remedy succeeded in full in six months. The kisans of Champaran became politically conscious without any direct effort. The tangible proof they had of the working of non-violence to remove their grievance drew them to the Congress, and led by Babu Brajkishore Prasad and Babu Rajendra Prasad they gave a good account of themselves during the civil disobedience campaigns.

"The reader may also profitably study the kisan movements in Kheda, Bardoli and Borsad. The secret of success lies in a refusal to exploit the kisans for the political purposes outside their own

personal and felt grievances. Organization round a specific wrong they would understand. Then they do not need sermons on non-violence. They apply an effective remedy which they can understand, and later when they are told that the method they were applying was non-violent they readily recognize it as such.

"From these illustrations, the Congressmen who care could study how work can be done for and among the kisans. I hold that the method that some Congressmen have followed to organize kisans has done them no good and has probably harmed them. Anyway they have not used the non-violent method. Be it said to the credit of some of these workers that they frankly admit that they do not believe in the non-violent method. My advice to such workers would be that they should neither use the Congress name nor should work as Congressmen.

"The reader will now understand why I have refrained from the competition to organize the kisans and labour on an all-India basis. How I wish that all hands pulled in the same direction. But perhaps, in a huge country like ours it is impossible. Anyway, in non-violence there is no coercion. Cold reason and demonstration of the working of non-violence must be trusted to do the work.

"I have reserved students to the last. I have always cultivated a close contact with them. The students know me and I know them. They have given me service. Many ex-collegians are my esteemed co-workers. I know that they are the hope of the future. In the heyday of non-co-operation they were invited to leave their schools and colleges. Some professors and students who responded to the Congress call have remained steadfast and gained much for the country and themselves. The call has not been repeated, for there is not the atmosphere for it. But experience has shown that the lure of the current education, though it is false and unnatural, is too much for the youth of the country. College education provides a career. It is a passport for entrance to the charmed circle. Pardonable hunger for knowledge cannot be satisfied otherwise than by going through the usual rut. They don't mind the waste of precious years in acquiring knowledge of an utterly foreign language which takes the place of the mother tongue. The sin of it is never felt. They and their teachers have made up their minds that the indigenous languages are useless for gaining access to modern thought and modern sciences. I wonder how the Japanese are faring. For

their education, I understand, is all given in Japanese. The Chinese Gerneralissimo knows very little, if anything, of English.

"But such as the students are, it is from these young men and young women that the future leaders of the nation are to rise. Unfortunately, they are acted upon by every variety of influences. Non-violence offers them little attraction. A blow for a blow or two for one is an easily understandable proposition. It seems to yield immediate result though momentary. It is a never-ending trial of brute strength as we see among the brutes or among human beings in the war which has now become almost universal. Appreciation of non-violence means patient research and still more patient and difficult practice. I have not entered the list of competitors for the students' hand, for the reasons that have dictated my course about the kisans and labour. But I am myself a fellow student with them. Only my university is different from theirs. They have a standing invitation from me to come to my university and join me in my search. Here are the terms:

"1. The students must not take part in party politics. They are students, searchers, not politicians.

"2. Students may not resort to political strikes. They must have their heroes, but their devotion to them is to be shown by copying the best in their heroes, not by going on strikes if the heroes are imprisoned or die or are even sent to the gallows. If their grief is unbearable and if all the students feel equally, with the consent of their principals, the schools or colleges may be closed on such occasions. If the principals will not listen, it is open to the students to leave their institutions in a becoming manner till the managers repent and recall them. On no account, may they use coercion against the non-co-operators or against the authorities. They must have the confidence that, if they are united and dignified in their conduct, they are sure to win.

"3. They must all do sacrificial spinning in a scientific manner. Their tools will be always neat, clean, and in good order and condition. If possible, they will learn to make them themselves. Their yarn will naturally be of the highest quality. They will study the literature about spinning with all its economic, social, moral and political implications.

"4. They will be khadi users all through and use village products to the exclusion of all similar things, foreign or machine-made.

"5. They may not impose 'Bande Mataram' or the national flag on others. But they may wear national flag buttons on their own persons but not force others to do the same.

"6. They can enforce the message of the tricolour flag in their own persons and harbour neither communalism nor untouchability in their hearts. They will cultivate real friendship with students of other faiths and with the Harijans, as if they were their own kith and kin.

"7. They will make it a point to give first aid to their injured neighbours and do scavenging and cleaning in the neighbouring villages and even instruct village children and adults.

"8. They will learn the national language, Hindustani, in its present double dress, Hindi and Urdu, so that they may feel at home whether Hindi or Urdu is spoken.

"9. They will translate into their own mother tongue everything new they may learn and transmit it in their weekly rounds to the surrounding villages.

"10. They will do nothing in secret, they will be above-board in all their dealings, they will lead a pure life of self-restraint, shed all fear and be always ready to protect their weak fellow students, and be ready to quell riots by non-violent conduct at the risk of their lives. And when the final heat of the struggle comes, they will leave their institutions and, if need be, sacrifice themselves for the freedom of their country.

"11. They will be scrupulously correct and chivalrous in their behaviour towards their girl fellow students.

"For working out the programme I have sketched for them, the students must find time. I know that they waste a great deal of time in idleness. By strict economy, they can save many hours. But I do not want to put an undue strain upon any student. I would, therefore, advise the patriotic students to lose one year, not at a stretch but spread it over their whole study. They will find that one year so given will not be a waste of time. The effort will add to their equipment, mental, moral and physical, and they will have made even during their studies a substantial contribution to the freedom movement."

In the epilogue to *Constructive Programme*, Gandhi wrote:

"I have said in these pages that civil disobedience is not absolutely necessary to win freedom through purely non-violent efforts

if the co-operation of the whole nation is secured in the constructive programme. But such good luck rarely favours nations or individuals. Therefore, it is necessary to know the place of civil disobedience in a nation-wide non-violent effort.

"It has three definite functions:

"1. It can be effectively offered for the redress of a local wrong.

"2. It can be offered without regard to effect, though aimed at a particular wrong or evil, by way of self-immolation, in order to rouse the local consciousness or conscience. Such was the case in Champaran when I offered civil disobedience without any regard to the effect and well knowing that even the people might remain apathetic. That it proved otherwise may be taken, according to taste, as God's grace or a stroke of good luck.

"3. In the place of full response to constructive effort, it can be offered as it is being offered at present. Though it is a contribution to and part of the battle for freedom, it is purposely centred round a particular issue, free speech. Civil disobedience can never be in general terms such as for independence. The issue must be definite and capable of being clearly understood and within the power of the opponent to yield. This method properly applied must lead to the final goal.

"I have not examined the full scope and the possibilities of civil disobedience. I have touched enough of it to enable the reader to understand the connection between the constructive programme and civil disobedience. In the first two cases, no elaborate constructive programme was or could be necessary. But when civil disobedience is itself devised for the attainment of independence, previous preparation is necessary, and it has to be backed by the visible and conscious effort of those who are engaged in the battle. Civil disobedience is thus a stimulation for fighters and a challenge to the opponent, in the present instance, authority. It should be clear to the reader that civil disobedience in terms of independence without co-operation of the millions by way of constructive effort is mere bravado and worse than useless.

"This is not a thesis written on behalf of the Congress or at the instance of the central office. It is the outcome of conversations I had with some co-workers in Sevagram. They had felt the want of something from my pen showing the connection between the constructive programme and civil disobedience and how the former

might be worked. I have endeavoured to supply the want in this pamphlet. It does not purport to be exhaustive, but it is sufficiently indicative of the way the programme should be worked.

"Let not the reader make the mistake of laughing at any of the items as being part of the movement for independence. Many people do many things, big and small, without connecting them with non-violence or independence. They have then their limited value as expected. The same man appearing as a civilian may be of no consequence, but appearing in his capacity as general he is a big personage, holding the lives of millions at his mercy. Similarly the charkha in the hands of a poor widow brings a paltry price to her. In the hands of a Jawaharlal, it is an instrument of India's freedom. It is the office which gives the charkha its dignity. It is the office assigned to the constructive programme which gives it an irresistible prestige and power.

"Such at least is my view. It may be that of a madman. If it makes no appeal to the Congressmen, I must be rejected. For my handling of civil disobedience without the constructive programme will be like a paralysed hand attempting to lift a spoon."

Jawaharlal My Successor

1941-1942

On December 23, 1941, the Working Committee met at Bardoli to review the situation as it had developed since its last meeting held fourteen months ago. Japan having plunged in the war, the committee had to take a realistic view of the menacing situation. For a week, the members sat to discuss matters threadbare and came to the following conclusion:

"While there has been no change in the British policy towards India, the Working Committee must nevertheless take into full consideration the new world situation that has arisen by the development of the war into a world conflict and its approach to India. The sympathies of the Congress must inevitably lie with the peoples who are the subject of aggression and who are fighting for their freedom, but only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis and be of help in the furtherance of the larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war.

"The whole background in India is one of hostility and of distrust of the British Government and not even the most far-reaching promises can alter this background, nor can a subject India offer voluntary or willing help to an arrogant imperialism which is indistinguishable from the fascist authoritarianism. The committee is, therefore, of opinion that the resolution of the A.-I.C.C. passed in Bombay on September 16, 1940 holds today and defines the Congress policy still."

The Working Committee stressed the importance of the constructive programme and expressed respectful appreciation of Gandhi's leadership and of the response of the nation to it; but Gandhi was no longer a leader. He stood for complete non-participation in the war under all circumstances.

In a letter to President Azad, Gandhi wrote:

"In the course of discussion, I discovered that I had committed a grave error in the interpretation of the Bombay resolution. I had interpreted it to mean that the Congress was to refuse participation in the present or all wars on the ground principally of non-violence. I found to my astonishment that most members differed from my interpretation and held that the opposition need not be on the ground of non-violence. On re-reading the Bombay resolution I found that the differing members were right and that I had read into it a meaning which its letter could not bear. The discovery of the error makes it impossible for me to lead the Congress in the struggle for resistance to the war effort on the grounds in which non-violence was not indispensable. I could not, for instance, identify myself with opposition to war effort on the ground of ill will against Great Britain. The resolution contemplated the material association with Great Britain in the war effort as a price for guaranteed independence of India. If such was my view and I believed in the use of violence for gaining independence and yet refused participation in the war effort as the price of that independence, I would consider myself guilty of unpatriotic conduct. It is my certain belief that only non-violence can save India and the world from self-extinction. Such being the case, I must continue my message, whether I am alone or am assisted by an organization or individuals. You will, therefore, please relieve me of the responsibility laid upon me by the Bombay resolution. I must continue civil disobedience for free speech against all wars with such Congressmen and others whom I select and who believe in the non-violence I have contemplated and are willing to conform to the prescribed conditions. I will not, at this critical period, select for civil disobedience those whose services are required to steady and help the people in their respective localities."

In view of Gandhi's request, the Working Committee passed the following resolution:

"The Working Committee has received a letter from Gandhiji and recognizes the validity of the point he has raised and, therefore, relieves him of the responsibility laid upon him by the Bombay resolution referred to by him, but the committee assures him that the policy of non-violence adopted under his guidance for the attainment of swaraj and which has proved so successful in leading to mass awakening and otherwise will be adhered to by the Congress.

"The Working Committee further assures him that it would like to extend its scope, as far as possible, even in a free India. The committee hopes that Congressmen will tender him full assistance in the prosecution of his mission including the offering of civil disobedience."

On January 5, 1942, Gandhi explained for over an hour the implications of the Bardoli resolution to the members of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee: "The resolution means that if the Government gave a guarantee that full freedom would be given after the war, the Congress would give help in keeping this empire alive. It was not that the bargain had been actually made, but the terms had been agreed upon, whereas, if I did not want to enter into any bargain at all, I should plainly say so. If you feel that on your agreeing to offer full co-operation in the war effort, India will have Complete Independence after the war, that the British will thereafter remain in India at your mercy and sufferance, that even during the war you will run your own affairs provided, of course, that your Defence Minister will carry on the war to victory, you must confirm the Bardoli resolution. The temptation is very great indeed. If for that sake you are ready to reverse the policy of the Congress and purchase swaraj and pay as price thereof ahimsa, you must confirm the resolution. Remember that the very greatest of our leaders are party to the resolution and they have not chosen to do so lightly. As against this, there are those who think that ahimsa is a pearl of great price and that it cannot be given up, that it can never be the price of swaraj, then their position is different. If you are in doubt and feel that in sticking to ahimsa you lose both ahimsa—because you are incapable of it—and swaraj, that Gandhi is a good man but it would be prudent not to go the whole length with him, then you must accept the resolution. Only those will express their disapproval of it who are sure in their heart of hearts that prudence, political insight, policy, every consideration demands that ahimsa may not be sacrificed for swaraj."

The retirement of Gandhi from the leadership of the Congress was acclaimed by many as an event "of the greatest significance". On January 7, on the eve of his departure from Bardoli, Gandhi issued the following statement:

"My being relieved of the direction of Congress civil disobedience does not reduce my responsibility but increases it manifold. For one

thing, my official disconnection with the Congress itself increases my detachment; but since detachment never means indifference, my attachment to every Congressman increases and I must speak to him more than before. The voice of silence was enough to direct the campaign of civil disobedience, but it is not enough to explain and to interpret in terms of non-violence the day-to-day puzzles that arise in the minds of Congressmen and others by reason of the overwhelming events happening near us.

"Rangoon was naturally and culturally part of us, before Burma years ago became part of British India and, therefore, it remains part of us, though now sundered. What has happened there, has had its repercussions all over India.

"So far as I can see, civil disobedience in the sense in which it was launched is not likely to be revived on behalf of the Congress till the war has ended. In a purely symbolic manner it may have to be kept up, not in the name of the Congress but on behalf of resisters of all war on the pure ground of non-violence, no matter how few the resisters are. It will be kept up for the sake of asserting the right of resisters to carry on propaganda against all war. They dare not keep still in the midst of the unhuman slaughter that is going on. They must not only speak and write against it, but they must, if need be, sacrifice themselves in the attempt to stop the torrent of blood. Whether they are a few or many, they have to live their mission.

"Before taking any step in the direction of civil disobedience, I propose to restart the three weeklies and understand the reaction of Government to the new orientation. I hope that they will have no objection to propaganda, naturally non-violent, against all war. It would be non-embarrassing in the sense that there cannot be, as there never was, any idea of surrounding or picketing munition factories or recruiting offices.

"If the right is not conceded, there must be token civil disobedience by the fewest possible, even one or two known believers in the resistance to all war. I must not select many, because every worker is wanted to educate the people in the art of non-violent behaviour in the face of impending danger.

"Strange as it may appear, I suggest that ceaseless occupation in the constructive programme is the best preparation to face the danger. For it means concentration in the villages of the city people

and their being occupied and occupying the villagers in productive and educative work.

"This removes unemployment and with it fear. Such movement on a large scale at once inaugurates a new social order. It will constitute the greatest contribution to internal peace, and should render nugatory formidable panicky ordinances just issued."

On train to Wardha, on January 9, Gandhi wrote as to why he intended to restart *Harijan* and two other allied weeklies:

"While I was engaged in organizing and conducting the civil disobedience movement on behalf of the Congress, I could not issue the three weeklies without noticing the doings of the civil resisters and the general progress of the movement. That would have been to turn the weeklies into civil disobedience organs and to challenge the Government to suppress them. The Government in their turn could not but have accepted the challenge and suppressed the papers and even prosecuted me. Whilst I must always be ready to welcome imprisonment, I was not then ready to court it. Nor was it my plan to invite suppression, when my avowed object was to organize strictly and only individual civil disobedience. Therefore, even at the price of sacrificing the pleasure of serving the people in various ways through the weeklies, duty demanded their stoppage. I feel that the step taken was correct in every way.

"The reason for suspension now no longer exists. On the contrary, I should fail in my duty, if I did not resume publication. As I have repeatedly said, I am no enemy of Britain. I have many dear, personal friends among Britishers. I cannot wish ill to Britain. My resistance to war does not carry me to the point of thwarting those who wish to take part in it. I reason with them. I put before them the better way and leave them to make the choice.

"But we have arrived at a stage where it is no longer merely a question of resisting war effort. There are questions which confront war resisters as much as they confront war-mongers. And they can be decided only one way by both, though the approach must vary. Such are questions of dealing with scarcity of food and clothing, looting, and bread riots, etc. I have views on all these and like questions. Resumption of the weeklies is needed for the dissemination of my views on these and like matters. In the ability of the people to deal with them without fuss and even without Government effort lies the way to swaraj whose basis is non-violence. A

mere Government effort cannot deal with crises affecting millions of people unless there is voluntary response from them.

"If we wish to achieve swaraj through truth and non-violence, gradual but steady building up from the bottom upwards by constructive effort is the only way. This rules out the deliberate creation of an anarchical state for overthrow of the established order in the hope of throwing up from within a dictator who would rule with a rod of iron and produce order out of disorder.

"These columns will then deal with the day-to-day problems that face the people."

The first editorial, "Peace Organization", dated January 18, was written on the train itself:

"If the Congress were an organization with the military bias, there is no doubt that today it would be a full-fledged military unit, every member becoming trained to be an efficient soldier. Fortunately for India and humanity, the Congress is not such an organization. No other purely national organization is or can be in the India of today. Fortunately again for India and humanity, the Congress has pledged itself since 1920 to win India's freedom through non-violent means. But up to now, it has been largely a debating society, offering civil disobedience at intervals and all the time only playing with its vital programme of construction. At one time, every Congressman was expected to create something for the nation. He or she was to spin for the nation. Congressmen would not respond, and the clause about spinning was dropped. There were other items too which every Congressman was to work. But he has not done so to the extent expected. The moment has now come for him to make a definite choice. The only programme before him is to become a servant or soldier of peace. A soldier of peace, unlike the one of the sword, has to give all his spare time to the promotion of peace alike in the war time as in peace time. His work in peace time is both a measure of prevention of, as also that of preparation for, war time.

"If then I was a Congressman with a vote, I would vote, as an emergency measure, for requiring every Congressman, now on the Congress register or to come hereafter, to possess the minimum qualification for working the constructive programme. It would be wrong to remind me that the Congress should retain its democratic character. It will not lose it because, of its own motion, it

becomes an efficient working body which anybody undertaking to obey its discipline and conditions of membership may join. It will cease to be popular, if it cannot deserve popularity in times of stress. If it cannot provide work for the workless and hungry, if it cannot protect people from depredations or teach them how to face them, if it can't help them in the face of danger, it will lose its prestige and popularity. No person or corporation can live long on his or its capital. The latter has to circulate and multiply itself.

"The Congress has become popular because it has been foremost in fighting imperialism. Today the old way is of no avail. Nobody thinks of mass revolt at present. The best, quickest, and the most efficient way is to build up from the bottom. The psychological moment has come. 'Back to the villages!' has become a necessity from every point of view. Now is the time to decentralize production and distribution. Every village has to become a self-sufficient republic. It does not require brave resolutions. It requires brave, corporate, intelligent work. As far as I know, at the present moment, this is common ground between the rulers and the people.

"Let every Congressman answer for himself whether he will be a soldier or servant of peace or whether he will become a nonentity unwilling to take his place in building up swaraj."

In mid-January the A.-I.C.C. met at Wardha to consider afresh the new situation. The British attitude had undergone no change. "I have noted," said Mr. Amery, "the resolutions passed by the leaders of the political parties towards the end of December and the various statements made by the political leaders in connection therewith, but I regret I cannot discover in them any satisfactory response to the Viceroy's recent appeal for unity and co-operation in the face of common danger."

Starting the proceedings of the A.-I.C.C., Maulana Azad reviewed the events that led to the Bombay resolution in 1940 and the individual civil disobedience movement under the leadership of Gandhi. Referring to the recent Bardoli resolution, the president explained wherein he and other members of the Working Committee differed, leading to Gandhi's decision to be relieved of the official leadership of the Congress. Gandhi was firmly opposed to participation in war on the pure ground of non-violence, whereas they were opposed to it on political grounds. The Bardoli resolution was no more than a restatement of the well-known Congress

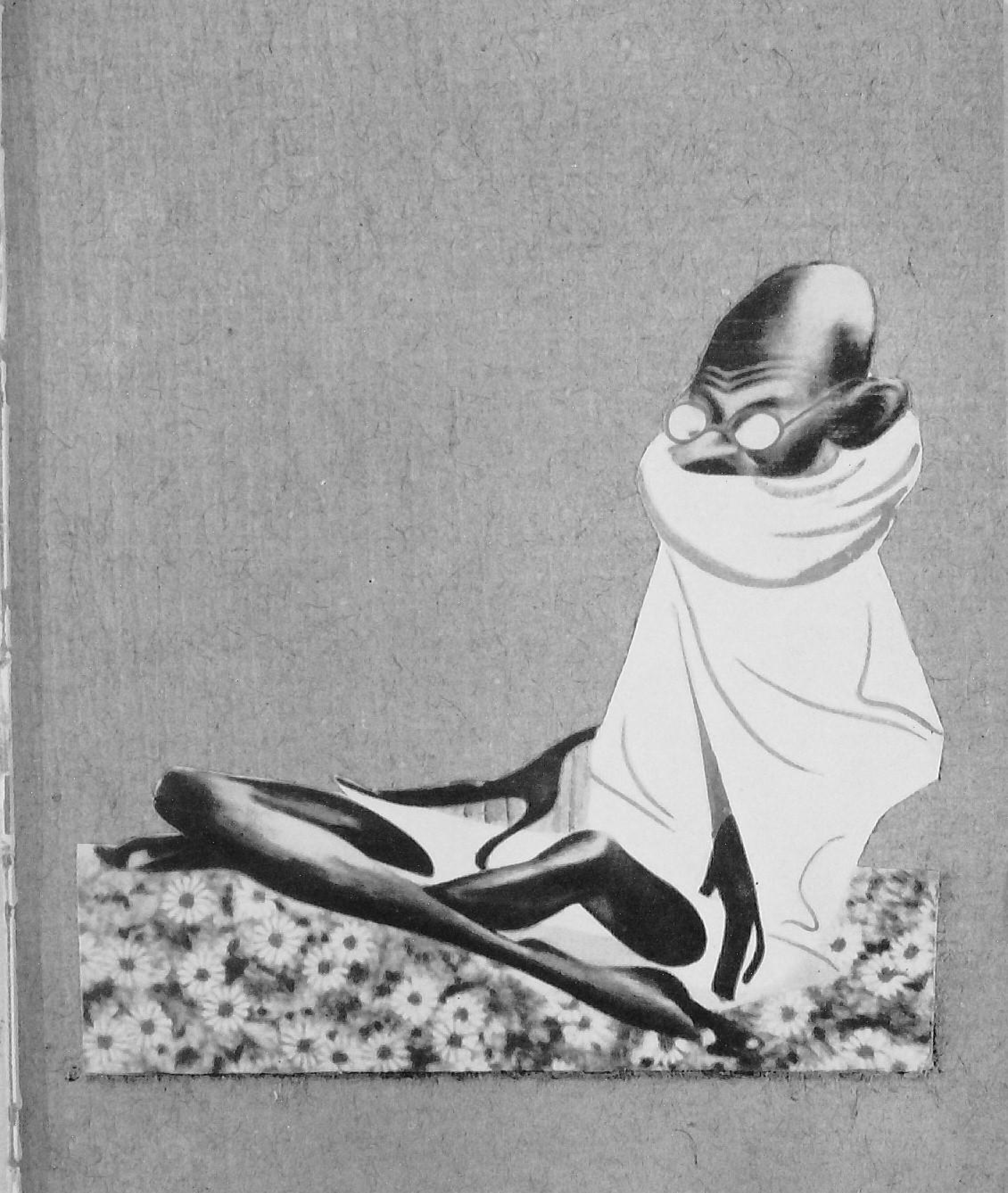
position. The bonds between the Congress and Gandhi were indissoluble; death alone could snap them.

President Azad then requested Gandhi to address the members. Speaking in Hindi, Gandhi said:

"I was not a little perturbed when the Maulana raised me sky-high. I do not live up in the air. I am of the earth, earthy. I have never seen an aeroplane. I am like you, an ordinary mortal made of common clay.

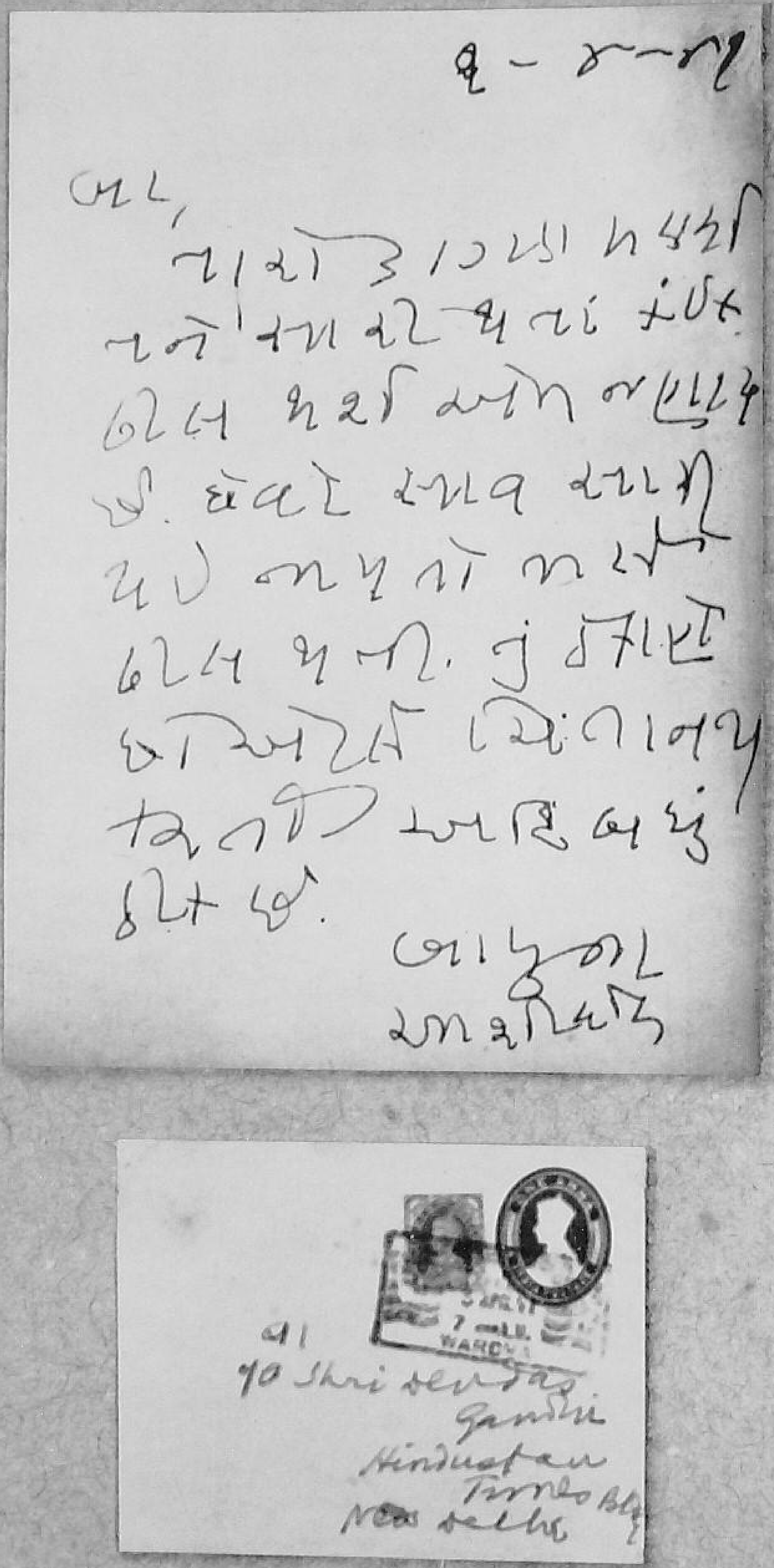
"The question of ahimsa would not have come up before you, had it not come up before the Working Committee in Bardoli. And it was well that it came up. The result has been good, not bad. But before I say anything on this question, let me make one or two things clear.

"I am an ordinary mortal like you. Had that not been the case, we should not have been able to work together these twenty years. Ahimsa with me is a creed, the breath of my life. But it is never as a creed that I placed it before India, or for the matter of that before anyone except in casual informal talks. I placed it before the Congress as a political method, to be employed for the solution of political questions. It may be it is a novel method, but it does not on that account lose its political character. I tried it for the first time in South Africa, after I found that all the so-called constitutional remedies, with which Congress work in India had made me familiar, had failed. The question there was exclusively of the political existence of the Indians who had settled in South Africa as merchants or petty hawkers. It was for them a question of life and death, and it was in dealing with it that this method of ahimsa came to me. The various measures that I adopted there were not the work of a visionary or a dreamer. They were the work of an essentially practical man dealing with practical political questions. As a political method, it can always be changed, modified, altered, even given up in preference to another. If, therefore, I say to you that our policy should not be given up today, I am talking political wisdom. It is political insight. It has served us in the past, it has enabled us to cover many stages towards independence, and it is as a politician that I suggest to you that it is a grave mistake to contemplate its abandonment. If I have carried the Congress with me all these years, it is in my capacity as a politician. It is hardly fair to describe my method as religious, because it is new.



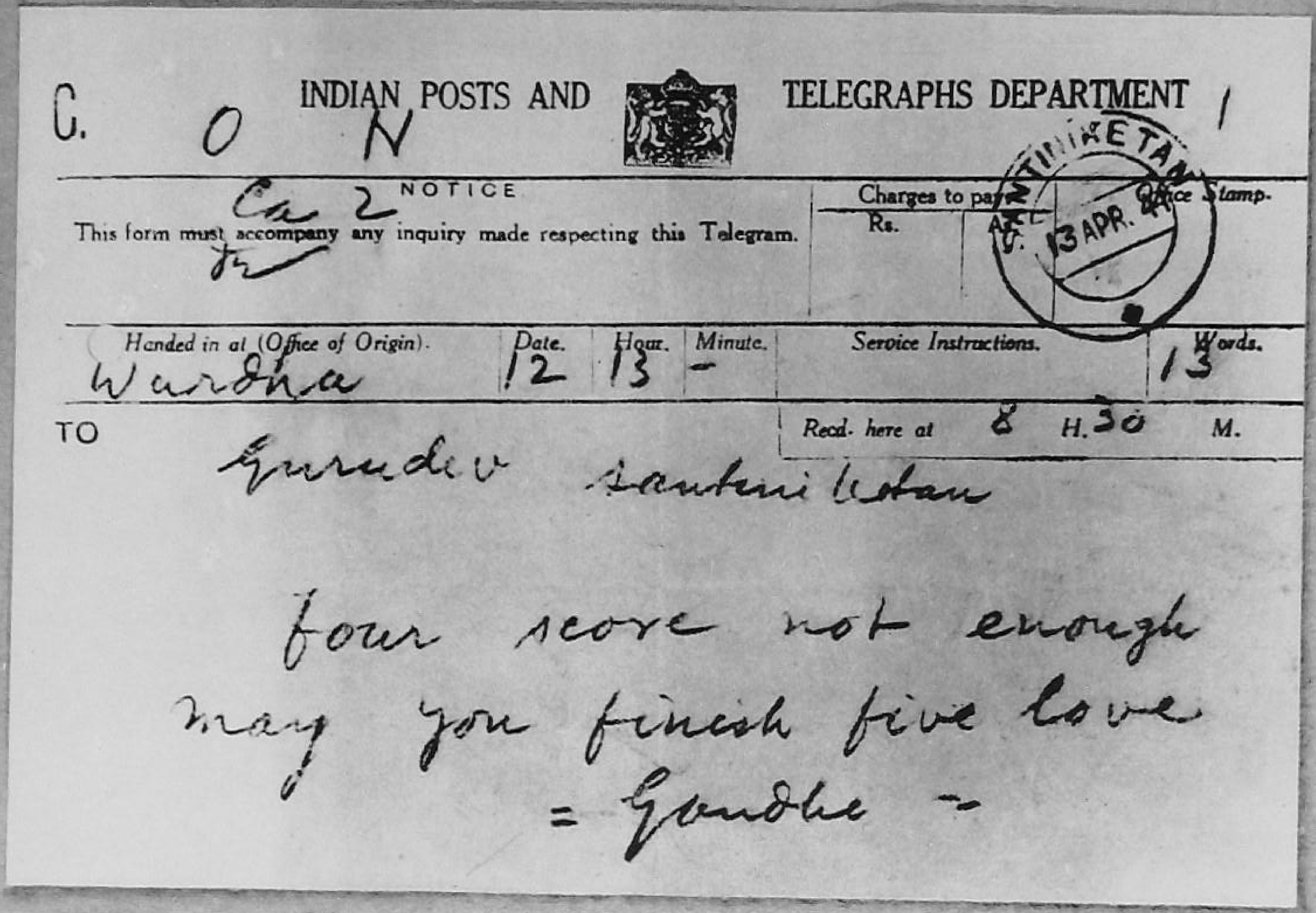
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

An American caricature of Gandhi, 1941



Courtesy : Manubehn Gandhi

Gandhi's letter to Kasturbai during her illness in Delhi, dated Sevagram, April 1, 1941



C. O N

INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT 1

NOTICE

Ca 2

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SANTINIKETAN 13 APR. 41

Handed in at (Office of Origin).	Date.	Hour.	Minute.	Service Instructions.	Words.
Wardha	12	13	-		13

TO

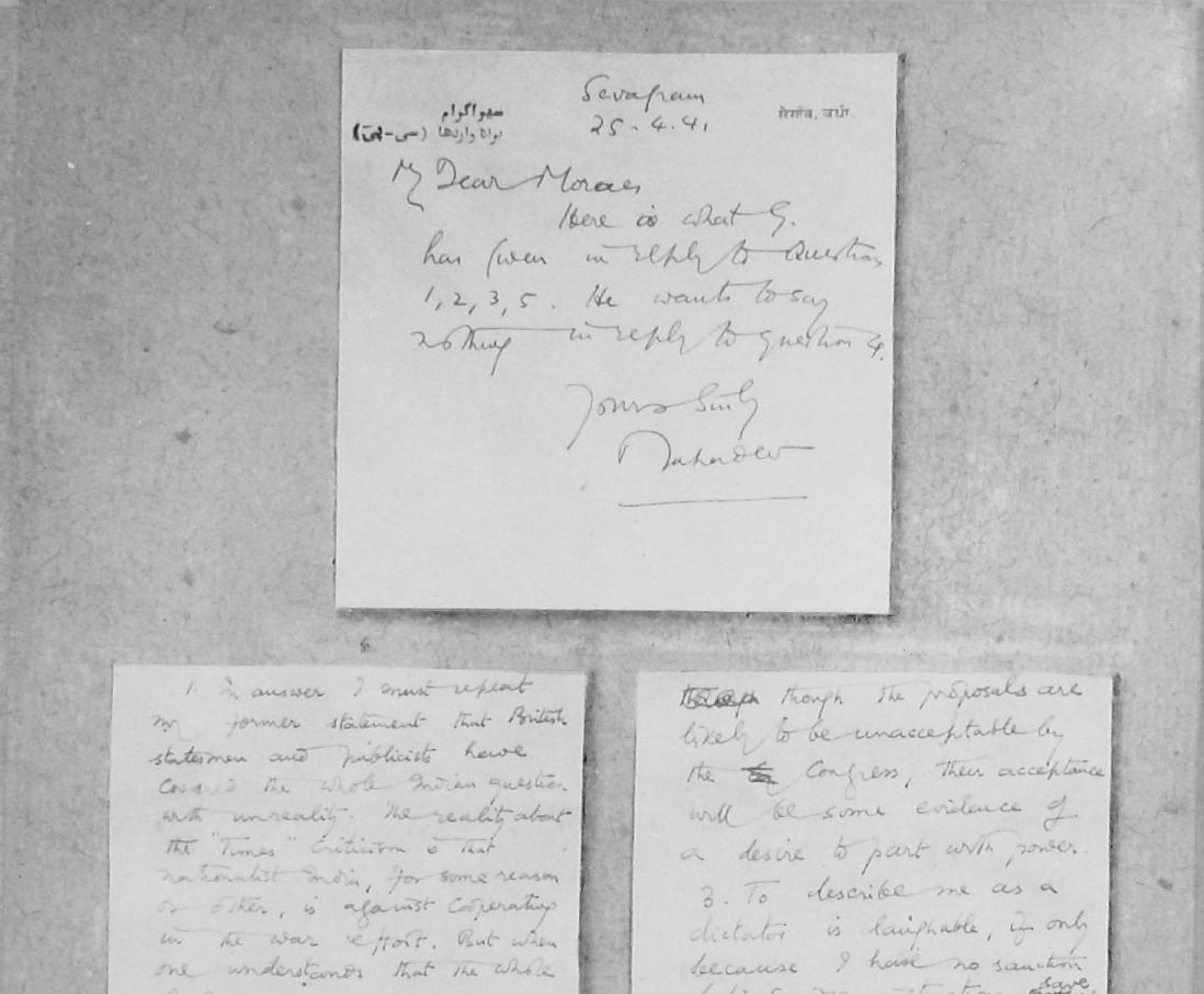
Recd. here at 8 H.30 M.

Gurudev Santiniketan

four score not enough
may you finish five love
= Gandhi =

Courtesy : Visva-Bharati

Gandhi's telegram to Tagore, dated Wardha, April 12, 1941



سیواگرام
براہ واردھا (سی-پی)

Sevagram
25 . 4 . 41

सेवाग्राम, वर्धा

My Dear Moraes

Here is what G. has given in reply to questions 1, 2, 3, 5. He wants to say nothing in reply to question 4.

Yours Sincerely
Mahadev

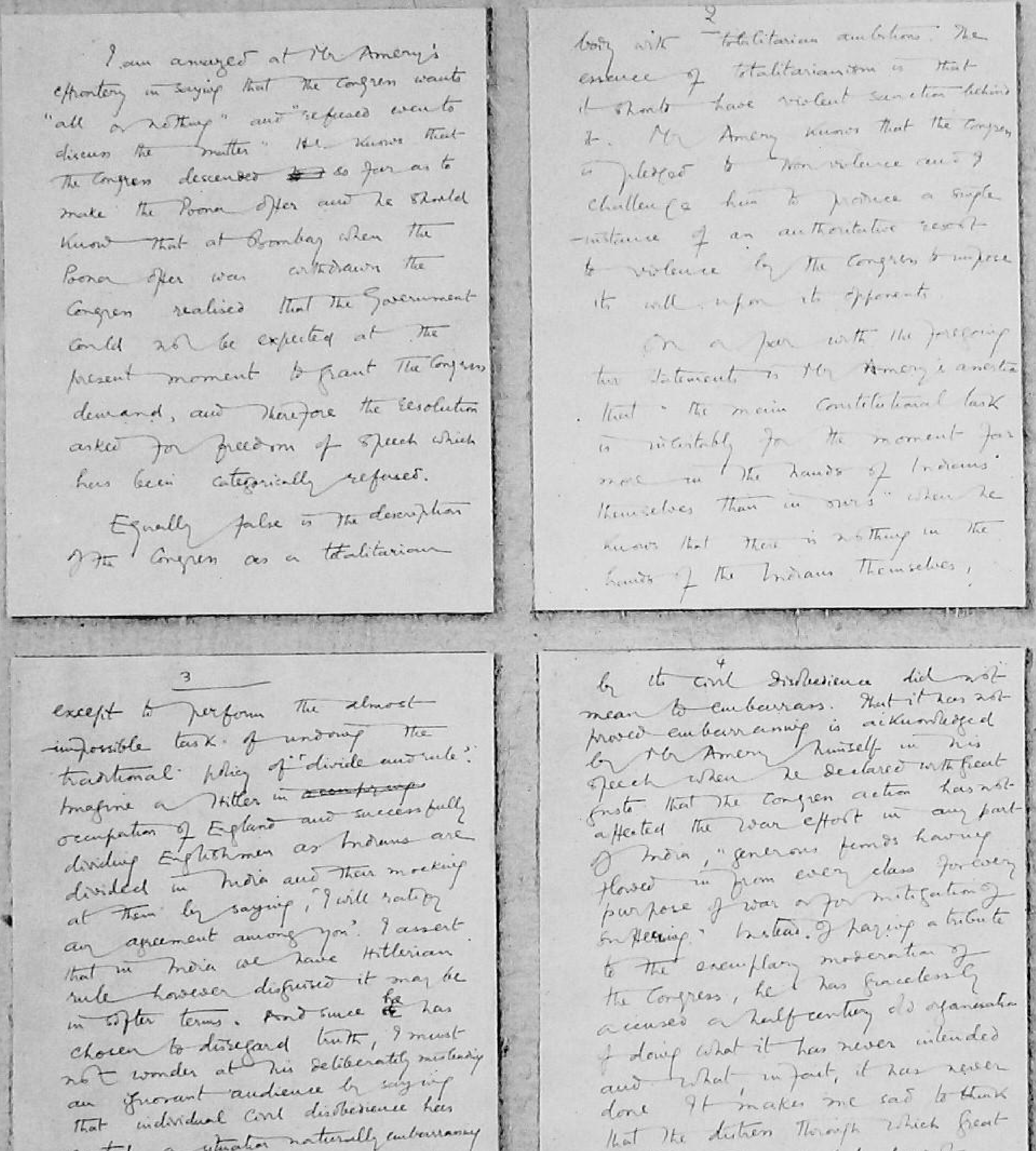
1. In answer I must repeat my former statement that British statesmen and publicists have covered the whole Indian question with unreality. The reality about the "Times" criticism is that nationalist India, for some reason or other, is against cooperating in the war effort. But when one understands that the whole of India is a prison and that the jailers are able to make the prisoners do what they like, it is small wonder that the British Government is able to impress what money and recruits they like. I have shown before now that the modern titled classes, including the ruling princes, are essentially a British creation.

2. If the proposals of the Bombay Conference are accepted in *toto* I shall admit that though the proposals are likely to be unacceptable by the Congress, their acceptance will be some evidence of a desire to part with power.

3. To describe me as a dictator is laughable, if only because I have no sanction behind my instructions, save the willing and affectionate endorsement thereof by Congressmen. I have imposed no views on anybody. Imposition of nonviolent views is a contradiction in terms. It is true that I cannot change what is described as my policy because my policy is my creed.

Courtesy : Frank Moraes

Gandhi's replies to questions put by Mr. Frank Moraes on behalf of *News Chronicle*, London, dated Sevagram, April 25, 1941



I am amazed at Mr Amery's effrontery in saying that the Congress wants "all or nothing" and "refused even to discuss the matter". He knows that the Congress descended so far as to make the Poona offer and he should know that at Bombay when the Poona offer was withdrawn the Congress realised that the Government could not be expected at the present moment to grant the Congress demand, and therefore the resolution asked for freedom of speech which has been categorically refused.

Equally false is the description of the Congress as a totalitarian

2

body with totalitarian ambitions". The essence of totalitarianism is that it should have violent sanction behind it. Mr Amery knows that the Congress is pledged to non-violence and I challenge him to produce a single instance of an authoritative resort to violence by the Congress to impose its will upon its opponents.

On a par with the foregoing two statements is Mr Amery's assertion that "the main constitutional task is inevitably for the moment far more in the hands of Indians themselves than in ours" when he knows that there is nothing in the hands of the Indians themselves,

3

except to perform the almost impossible task of undoing the traditional policy of "divide and rule". Imagine a Hitler in occupation of England and successfully dividing Englishmen as Indians are divided in India and then mocking at them by saying, 'I will ratify an agreement among you'. I assert that in India we have Hitlerian rule however disguised it may be in softer terms. And since he has chosen to disregard truth, I must not wonder at his deliberately misleading an ignorant audience by saying that individual civil disobedience has created a situation naturally embarrassing as it was meant to be. The written letter stands, and it is that the Congress

4

by its civil disobedience did not mean to embarrass. That it has not proved embarrassing is acknowledged by Mr Amery himself in his speech when he declared with great gusto that the Congress action has not affected the war effort in any part of India, "generous funds having flowed in from every class for every purpose of war or for mitigation of suffering". Instead of paying a tribute to the exemplary moderation of the Congress, he has gracelessly accused a half century old organisation of doing what it has never intended and what, in fact, it has never done. It makes me sad to think that the ordeal through which Great Britain is passing today has not sobered Mr Amery even to the extent of respecting cold fact.

Courtesy: Frank Moraes

Gandhi's reply at the request of Mr. Moraes to Mr. Amery's statement, dated April 1941

Telephone 41 (Wardha)

सेगांव
वर्धा होकर (मध्यप्रांत)

SEGAON
VIA WARDHA (C. P.)

Sevagram, 1-5-'41

To
the Editor of the Times of India, Bombay.

Dear Sir,

You write:-

"Mr. Amery may well retort that the "discrepancies" with which Mr. Gandhi charges him are also evident in the Congress leader's statement. Certainly the accusation that India has been "emasculated" because of the alleged British policy of keeping her "wholly unarmed" comes strangely from the arch-protagonist of non-violence."

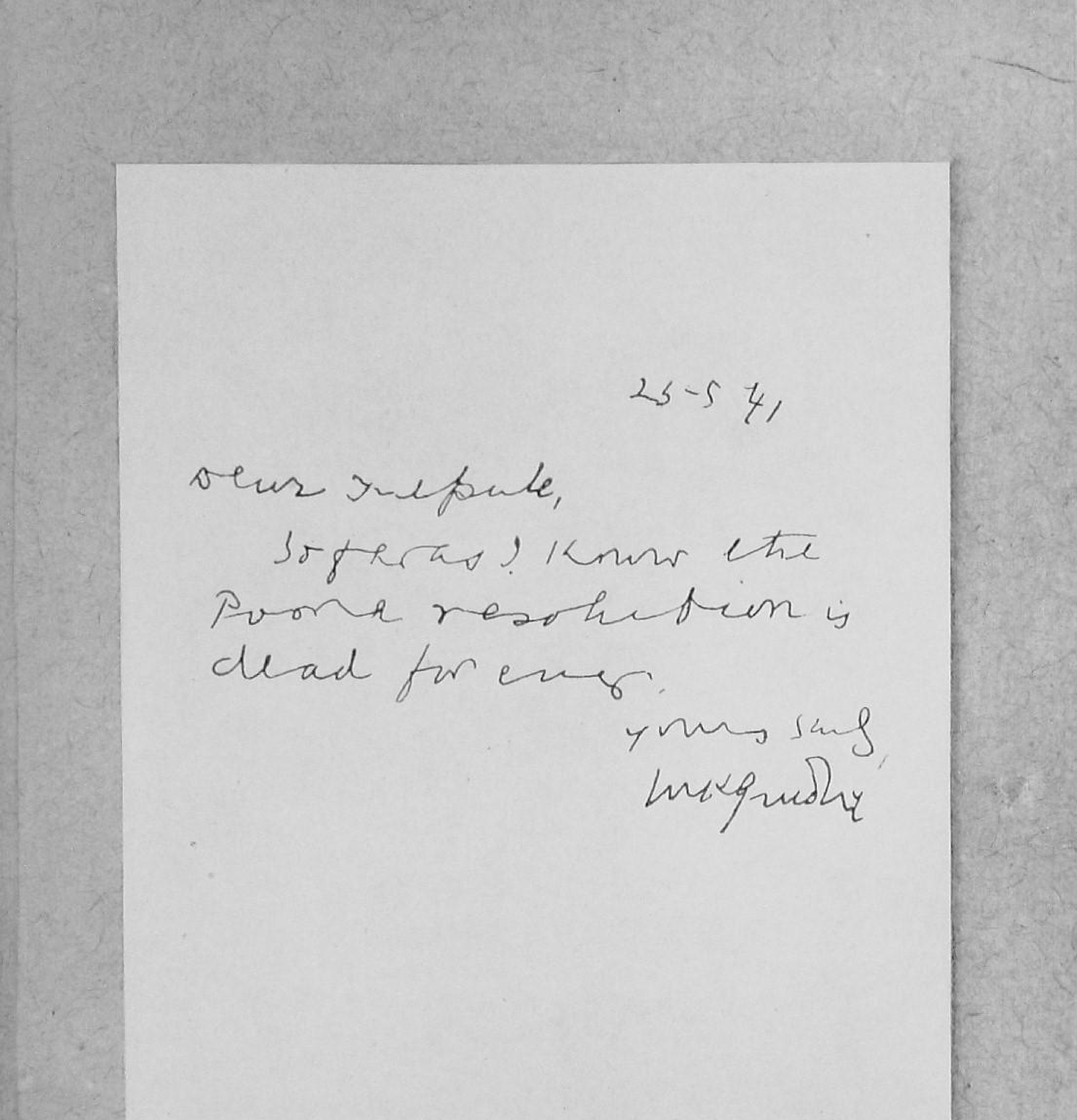
In 1908 when I first expeounded the life saving and the life giving truth of ahimsa I wrote that disarmament was the blackest page in British history in India. I repeated the same thing in 1918 when I was collecting recruits for the British army with a zeal that brought me serious illness and a fair measure of unpopularity. My statement passed muster then. But times have changed and I have become inconsistent for stating an unchallengeable fact. I suggest that non-violence cannot be imposed upon any one. It has to come from within. The British measure was undertaken to make British rule safe, not to make the people non-violent. It has made them impotent even for mischief. Good and impotent persons can never do. It is no matter for pride or credit that one representative of the British power can hold in abject subjection, say a village of 1000 souls. My non-violence does admit of people, who cannot or will not be non-violent, holding and making effective use of arms. Let me repeat for the thousandth time that non-violence is of the strongest, not of the weak. It is a force mightier than violence, though radically different from it in quality and effect.

Yours

M K Gandhi

Courtesy: *Frank Moraes*

Gandhi's letter to the editor of *Times of India*, dated Sevagram, May 1, 1941



25-5-41

Dear Tulpule,

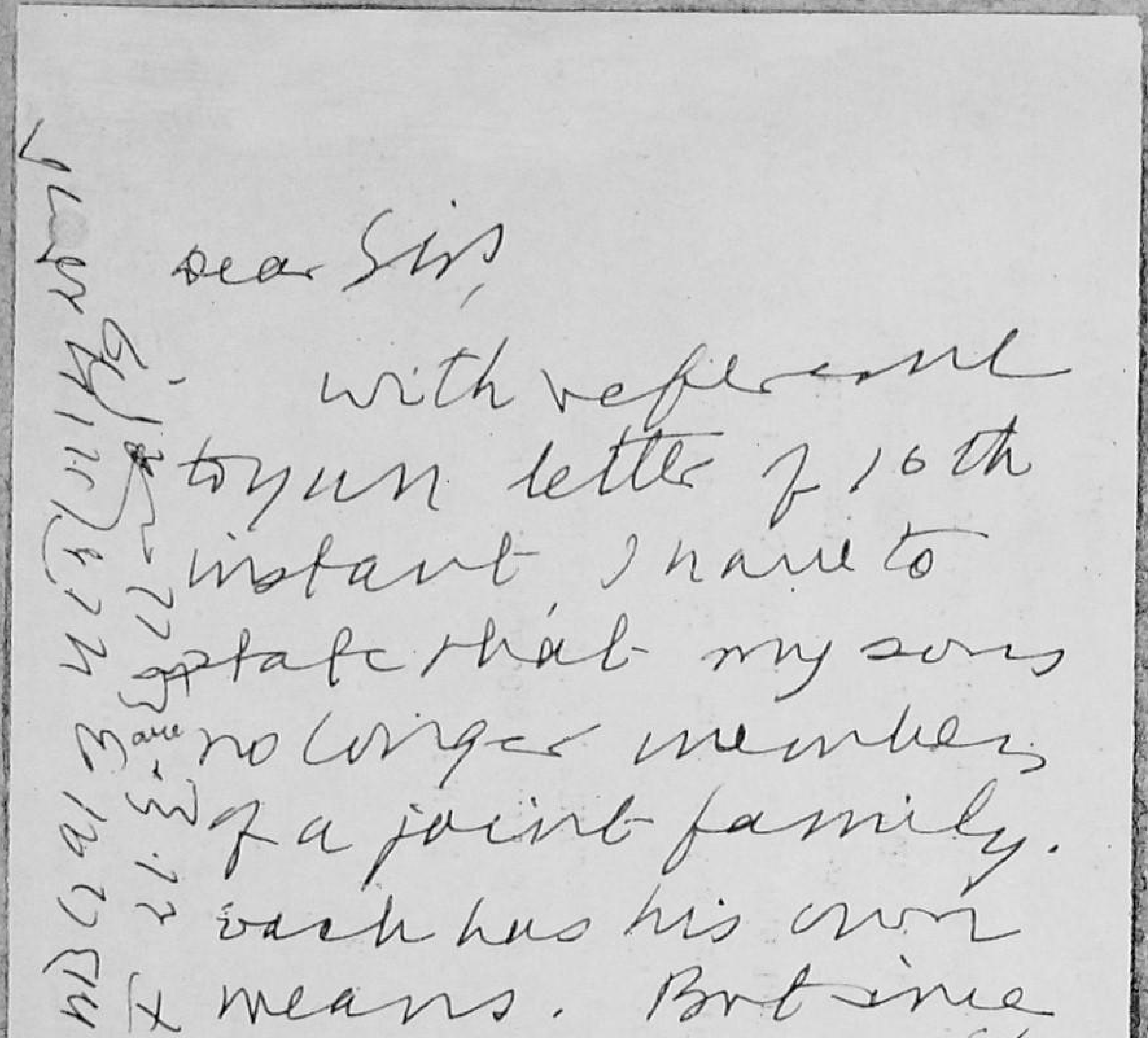
So far as I know the Poona resolution is dead for ever.

Yours sincerely

M. K. Gandhi

Courtesy : Chitrashala Press, Poona

Gandhi's letter to Mr. Tulpule, dated May 25, 1941

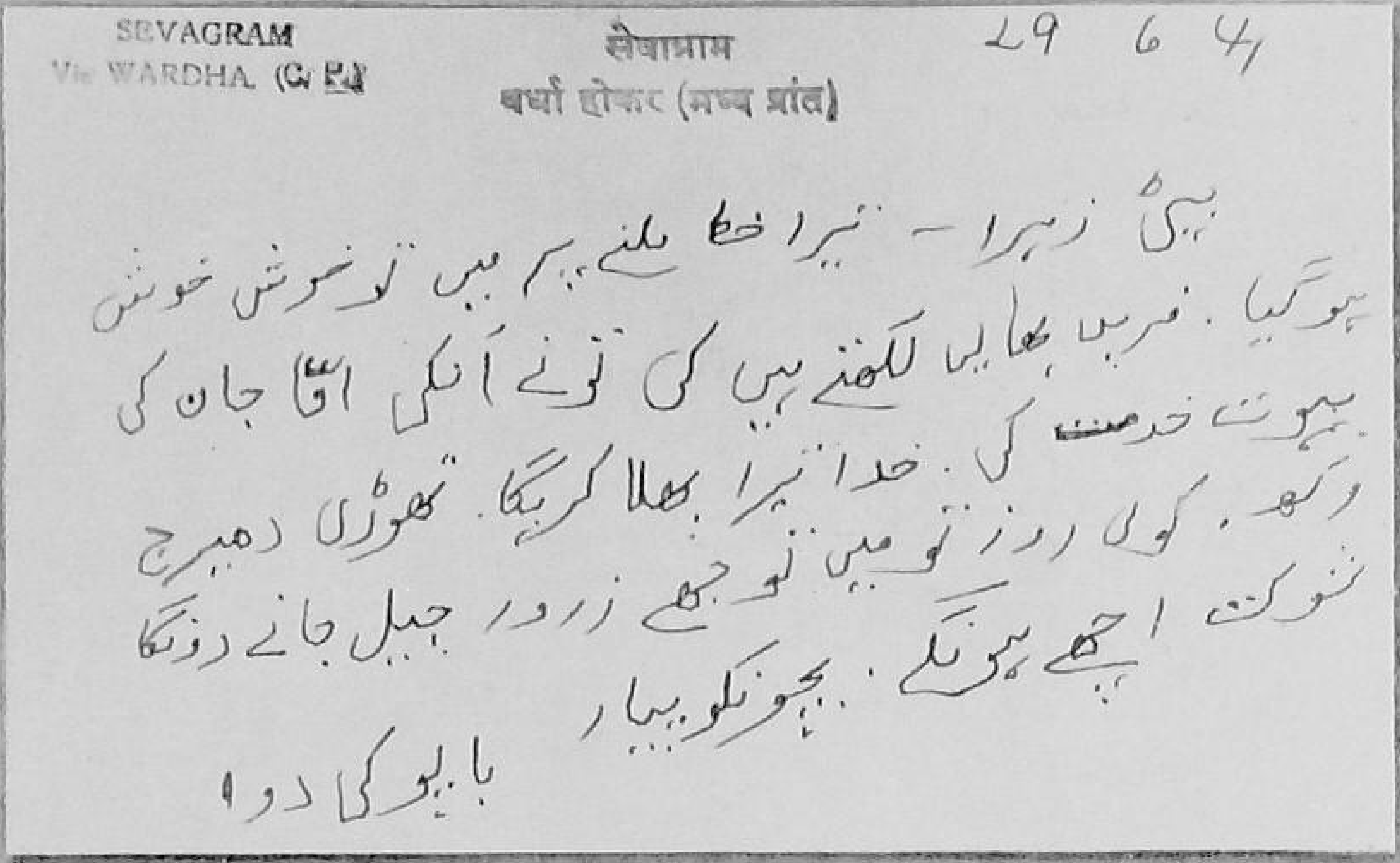


Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter of 16th instant I have to state that my sons are no longer members of a joint family. Each has his own means. But since there are funds with me belonging to my son Ramkrishna, I send you herewith notes for Rs 300 being the total fine inflicted upon ~~my son~~ him

Courtesy : R. Bajaj

Gandhi's draft statement on behalf of Jamnalal Bajaj, dated June 21, 1941



SEVAGRAM
Via WARDHA (C.P.)

सेवाग्राम
वर्धा होकर (मध्य प्रांत)

29 6 41

بیٹی زہرا - تیرا خط ملنے پر میں تو خوش خوش
ہو گیا. فریدہ بھابی لکھتے ہیں کی تونے انکی آقا جان کی
بہوت خدمت کی. خدا تیرا بھلا کریگا. تھوڑی دمبرج
وتھ . کوئی روز تو میں تو تجھے زرور جیل جانے دونگا
شوکت اچھے ہونگے. بچوں کو پیار

باپو کا دوا

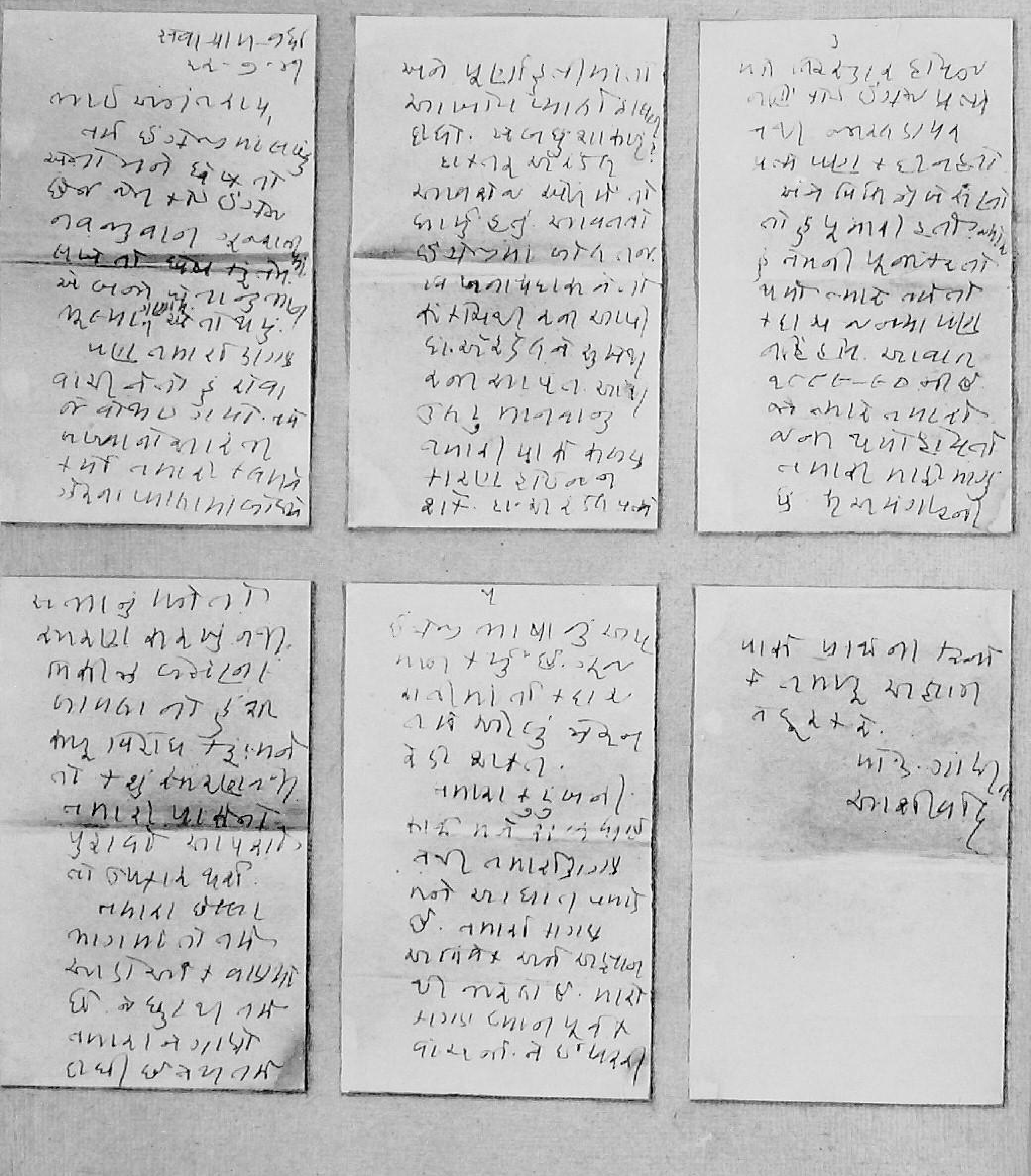
30-9-41

بی بی سلطانہ کو ینی میرا
کوٹ دیا ہے. اُسے وہ بیچیگی
اور اُسمیں سے جو پیسے ملینگے
وہ دین بندھو مفوریل میں
لیے جاینگے

مو. ک. گاندھی

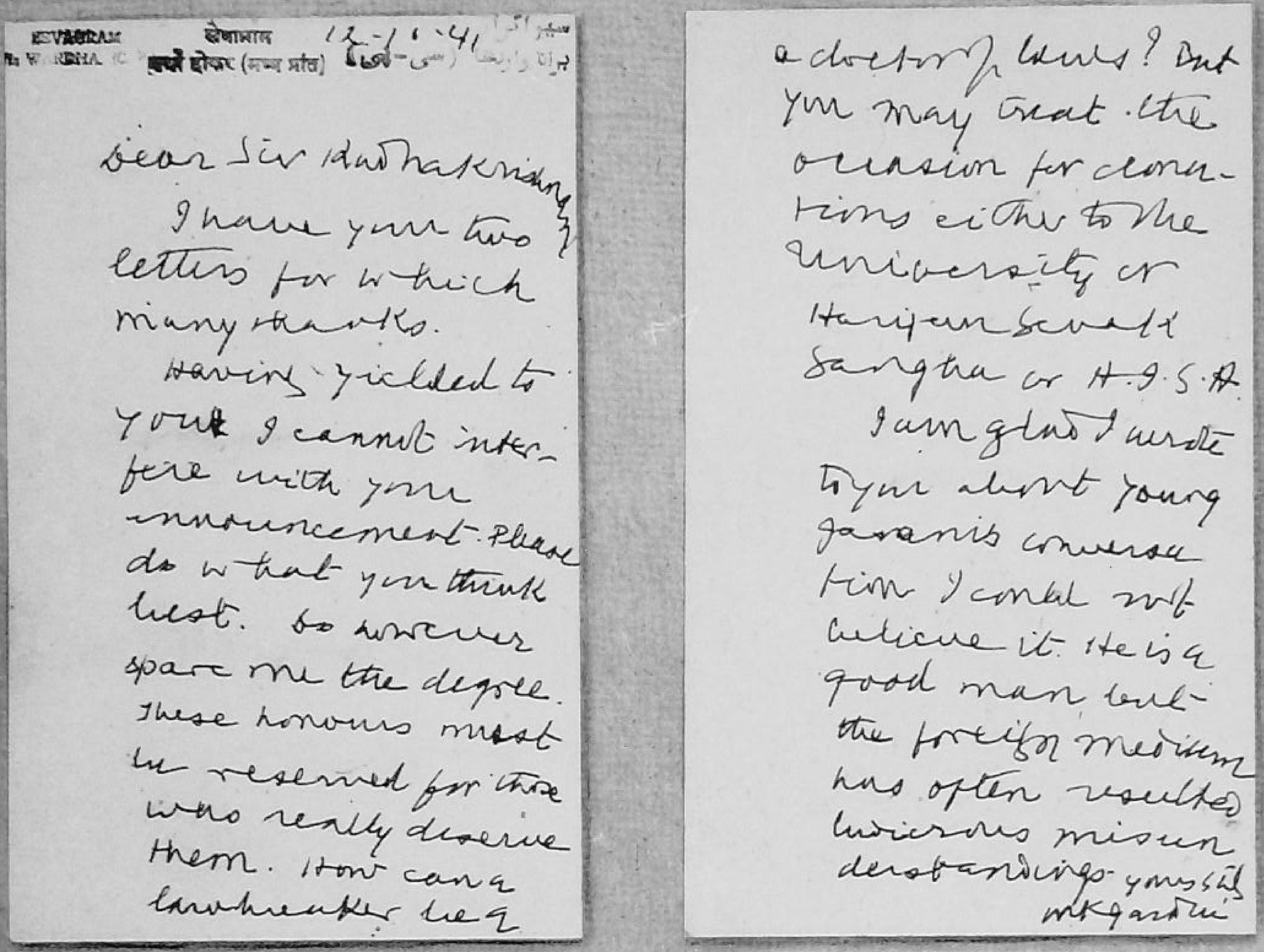
Courtesy: Zora Ansari

Gandhi's letters in Urdu, 1941



Courtesy : Anantrai Thakkar

Gandhi's reply to criticism by a theosophist follower, dated Sevagram, July 22, 1941


SEVAGRAM सेवाग्राम
Via WARDHA (C.P.) वर्धा होकर (मध्य प्रांत)
12-10-41

Dear Sir Radhakrishnan,

I have your two letters for which many thanks.

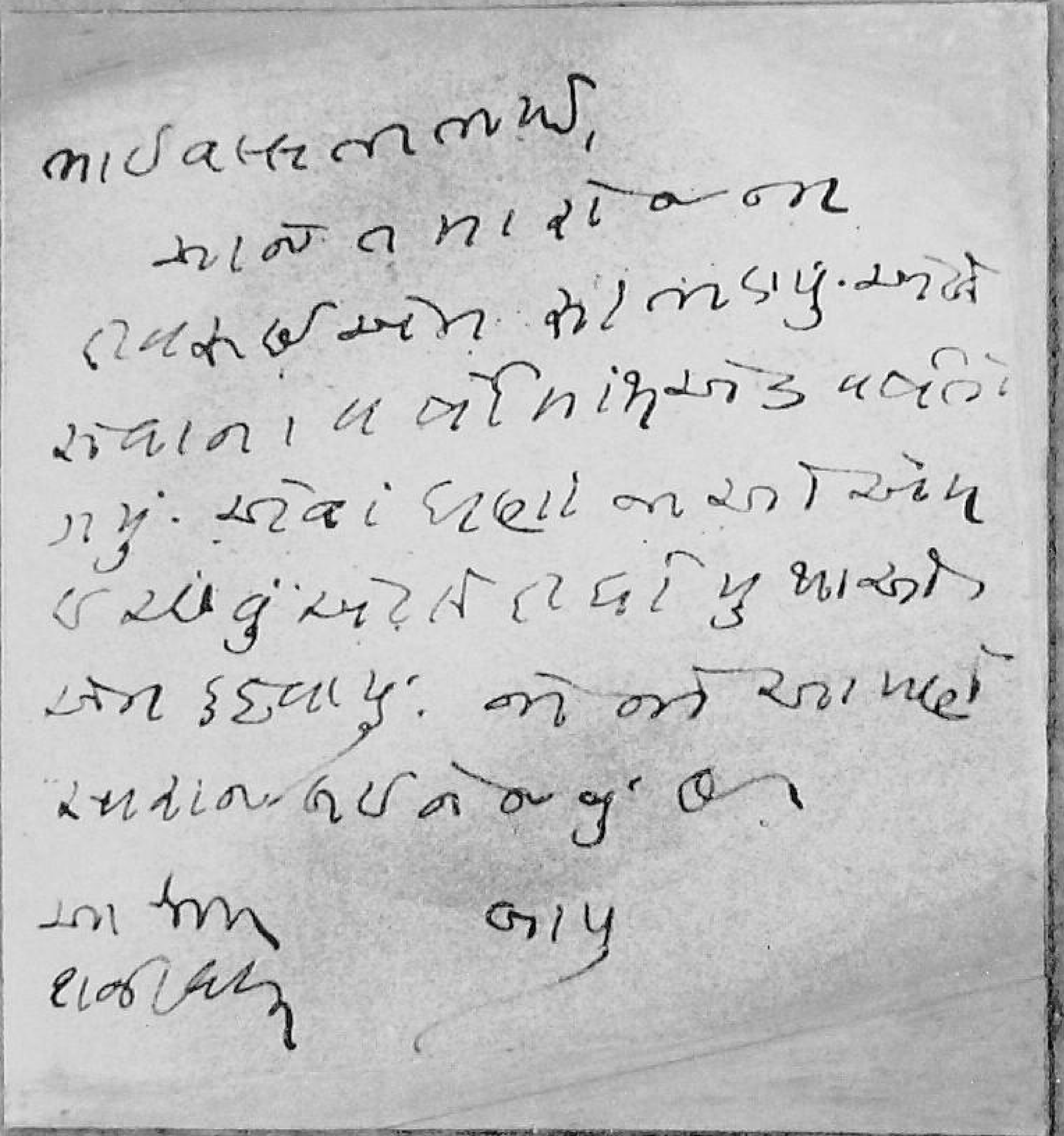
Having yielded to you I cannot interfere with your announcement. Please do what you think best. Do however spare me the degree. These honours must be reserved for those who really deserve them. How can a lawbreaker be a doctor of laws? But you may treat the occasion for donations either to the University or Harijan Sevak Sangha or H.S.S.

I am glad I wrote to you about young Jasani's conversation. I could not believe it. He is a good man but the foreign medium has often resulted ludicrous misunderstandings.

Yours sincerely
M.K. Gandhi

Courtesy : S. Radhakrishnan

Gandhi's letter to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, dated Sevagram, October 12, 1941



Gandhi's letter to Vallabhbhai Patel on his birthday, dated Sevagram, October 31, 1941

GL.46/6

"The Maulana has affectionately used high words of praise for me, but I cannot accept them. I have been taunted as a *bania.* I regard that as a certificate of merit. The article in my possession is an invaluable pearl. It has to be weighed in the proper scales and those who can pay the price for it can have it. It cannot be bartered away even for independence.

"Non-violence has brought us near to swaraj as never before. We dare not exchange it even for swaraj. For swaraj thus got will be no true swaraj. The question is not what we will do after swaraj. It is whether under given conditions we can give up non-violence to win swaraj. Again, do you expect to win real independence by abandoning non-violence? Independence for me means the independence of the humblest and the poorest amongst us. It cannot be obtained by joining the war. For the Congress to join any war before the attainment of Complete Independence is to undo the work of the past twenty years.

"And yet why is it that I stand before you to plead with you to accept the resolution, and not even to divide the house? The reason is that the resolution reflects the Congress mind. It undoubtedly is a step backward. We have not a clean slate to write on. Our elders have taken a step which has produced world-wide reactions. To alter the resolution out of shape is to ignore these. It would be unwise to change the policy adopted by the Working Committee. The world had a right to think that the Working Committee's policy would be endorsed by you. At one time I had thought of dividing the A.-I.C.C., but I saw that it would be a mistake. It would be almost violence. Non-violence does not act in the ordinary way.

"Sometimes a step back is a prelude to a step forward. And it is highly likely that our step will be of that character.

"The resolution is a mirror in which all groups can see themselves. The original was Jawaharlalji's draft, but it was referred to a sub-committee at whose hands it has undergone material changes. The original had left no room for Rajaji to work. The sub-committee opened a tiny window for him to squeeze in. Jawaharlalji's opposition to participation in the war effort is almost as strong as mine, though his reasons are different. Rajaji would participate, if certain conditions acceptable to the Congress were fulfilled. Non-violent non-co-operators like Rajendra Babu have certainly a place, for until the remote event takes place, non-violence rules supreme.

"It is no longer open to the Government and to the Congress critics to say that the Congress has banged the door to negotiation on the impossible or unpolitical ground of non-violence. The resolution throws the burden on the Government of wooing the Congress on the basis of participation in the war effort. That nothing is to be expected from the Government is probably too true. Only the resolution puts the Congress right with the expectant world. And since there is a party in the Congress who will welcome an honourable offer that will satisfy the rigidest test, it is as well that the resolution has accommodated this party. It is likely in the end to make all of one mind. Out-and-out believers in non-violence of the political type have the whole field open to them.

"When there was a talk of the A.-I.C.C. being possibly divided, several people contemplated the prospect with trepidation, lest the Congress should again listen to mad Gandhi's advice in order to retain his leadership, and become a religious organization instead of the political organization that it has been all these years. Let me disabuse them of their fear, and say that the Congress can do no such thing and that we have not wasted the past twenty years. All that the Congress has decided to do is that it will allow the world to deal with it in terms that the world can understand, and if the terms are good enough, it will accept them. But you may be also sure that the Congress will not be easily satisfied. It will go on repeating 'Not this', 'Not this', until it wins the real commodity it wants. You will, therefore, say exactly what you want, and I will also say all I want. That is why I have decided to issue the three weeklies, and I will go on venting my views therein with the fullest freedom, as long as I am allowed to do so. In the meanwhile, if you can get what you want, you will strike the bargain, and you may be sure that I will not shed a single tear. I, therefore, do not want to cheat the world of its jubilation over the resolution. I do not want the Congress to look ridiculous in the eyes of the world. I do not want it to be said that in order to retain my leadership, you bade good-bye to your convictions.

"Some of my friends have complained that the resolution has no operative clause. The complaint is true so far as the resolution is concerned. The resolution had to be merely explanatory. It is addressed less to Congressmen, it is addressed to the world. It is not even addressed to the Government.

"But there are instructions about the constructive programme for Congressmen. They form the operative part. It is a substitute for civil disobedience and the parliamentary programme. Civil disobedience has been wisely reserved for me as an expert. It is good that, so long as I am alive and well in mind, it is so reserved. And so far as I am concerned, there will be none, if the Government do not interfere with *Harijan*. For this weekly will constitute enough propaganda against all war. I have no ill will against Britishers, and for that matter against Germans, Italians or Japanese. I can have none against Russians who have done great things for the proletariat. The Chinese sail in the same boat with us. I would like these nations to be at peace with one another. I would like to think that India will, through her non-violence, be a messenger of peace to the whole world. Even political non-violence has potency of which we have no conception. *Harijan* will deliver the message of peace from week to week. But if this is not permitted, then will be the time for civil disobedience as a token. I want every worker to be out for constructive work. If I am rendered penless, I may become the sole resister. But I have no fixed plan. Events will show the way.

"So much for civil disobedience.

"Though the parliamentary mentality has come to stay, in my opinion, the parliamentary programme can have no place in Congress work, so long as the war lasts. The Congress cannot handle it without identifying itself with the war effort. I have always held that at all times it is the least part of a nation's activity. The most important and permanent work is done outside. The legislators are not the masters but the servants of their electors—the nation. The less, therefore, we look at and depend upon the parliaments, the better. Power resides in the people, either through their arms or through their civil disobedience, more comprehensively described as non-violent non-co-operation. But the power of non-co-operation comes only through solid, incessant constructive work. Non-violent strength comes from construction, not destruction. Hence today the constructive programme is the only thing before the Congress. And in this all parties are at one.

"Do not please go away with the idea that there is a rift in the Congress lute. The Working Committee has worked like the members of a happy family. Somebody suggested that Pandit Jawaharlal and I were estranged. It will require much more than differences of

opinion to estrange us. We have had differences from the moment we became co-workers, and yet I have said for some years and say now that not Rajaji but Jawaharlal will be my successor. He says that he does not understand my language, and that he speaks a language foreign to me. This may or may not be true. But language is no bar to a union of hearts. And I know this that when I am gone he will speak my language.

"Let there be no lack of understanding or of zeal among the Congressmen. Neither Jawaharlal nor Rajaji will let you be idle. I certainly will not. Lastly, let those who think that the constructive programme is insipid know that there is nothing in the Congress Working Committee's resolution to prevent a Congressman at his own risk from leading civil disobedience—individual or mass. And if he succeeds, he will win nothing but praise from all. But let me warn the enthusiasts that they will not handle the weapon with any success. They will only damage themselves and the cause by any hasty or ignorant action. And let me say as your expert that those who regard the constructive programme as insipid don't know what non-violence is and how it works.

"Some Congressmen are sorry because I have relinquished the leadership of the Congress. You have not lost me. You would lose me, only if I ceased to be loyal to the Congress, only if I ceased to be a practical man. It is not at Bardoli that I left the Congress. I did so seven years ago at Bombay, and I did so in order to be able to render greater service to the country and the Congress. My colleagues like the Sardar and Rajendra Babu are not happy over the resolution, but I am asking them not to leave the Working Committee. But even if they leave the Congress, the Congress is not going to cease to function. Its work will go on, whether they are there or not. No man, however great, is indispensable to it. Those who built up the Congress like Dadabhai, Pherozeshah and Tilak are no more, but the Congress still functions. For, they have left for us an edifice to work upon and expand. And if the passing away of these leaders has not made any difference, why should the withdrawal of other leaders make any?"

The resolution was seconded by Nehru and Rajagopalachari and was passed by a very large majority; only fifteen members voted against the resolution in the house of 219. The A.-I.C.C. endorsed the following instructions issued by the Working Committee:

"The constructive programme adopted by the Congress, and explained from time to time by Gandhiji, is of particular importance at this juncture. It is meant not only to bring about unity among various groups, to remove disabilities which keep sections of the community backward and depressed, to promote self-reliance and co-operative spirit among the people, to increase production and have fairer distribution, but it also furnishes the best opportunity and means of contacts with the people and service to them which are necessary for winning their confidence. The committee, therefore, call upon the Congress committees and workers to further this programme intensively, and exercise a steadying and strengthening influence in times of dislocation and uneasiness.

"During such times there is always a possibility of trouble being created by unsocial elements in the country. To avoid the emergence of such a situation and to meet it when it arises, volunteers should be organized in both the urban and the rural areas. Such organizations should be formed on the basis of strict non-violence, and it should always be remembered that the Congress adheres to this principle."

On January 17 Gandhi addressed some members of the A.-I.C.C. on the immediate task before Congressmen. "Will not the working of the constructive programme bring the Congressmen into conflict with the Government?" was the question asked. Gandhi's reply was that the whole programme was so conceived as to avoid conflict. "Of course," he affirmed, "the most innocent activity may be so manipulated as to provoke conflict. I expect every Congress worker to do his best to avoid it. But there is no help for it, if the Government prohibit such activities because they are undertaken by the Congressmen who believe that the working of the constructive programme will bring swaraj. That is the only non-violent way to achieve the end. Swaraj by non-violent means must come from the creative effort of those who desire it. The Government should welcome every such effort, unless they want to prevent even cent per cent non-violent movement. In that case, the conflict will become unavoidable. But I am of the opinion that no conflict is possible, at any rate, while the war lasts, unless the Congress workers want or provoke it. They have to work, work and work. They will make no speeches or demonstrations in doing their constructive work. As I have already said, today most of the items of constructive work

happen to be—like feeding and clothing—common cause between the Government and the people."

"The suspension of satyagraha," Gandhi said in reply to another question, "has connection only with the present condition of the country. I want every single man to remain outside and do work, rather than go to jail and read the Koran and the Gita and lead an easy life there. I won't let them lead an easy life. Jawaharlal will ask for diaries from thousands of men. He is not going to sleep. Therefore, if you will go away with the real message to the country, do not criticize this resolution. Nobody is rendered incapable of giving the fullest possible service, in fact, he is made capable of the fullest growth, by reason of this resolution. Civil disobedience remains under my control, and the reason for its suspension is wholly extraneous to my retirement from the office. Every one of you has to give a good account of yourself. If all will pull your full weight in the fulfilment of the constructive programme, you will find a different India in six months' time."

To Benares And Back

1942

THE WORK in Wardha over, Gandhi left for Benares. On train, on January 19, 1942, he wrote an editorial on "Real War Effort":

"The greatest need of the immediate present is to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. There is already scarcity in the land both of food and clothing. As the war progresses, both the scarcities must increase. There are no imports from outside, either of foodstuff or of cloth. The well-to-do may not feel the pinch as yet or at all, but the poor are feeling it now. The well-to-do live on the poor. There is no other way. What is then their duty? He who saves gains as much, that is to say he produces as much. Hence, those who feel for the poor, those who would be one with them, must curtail their wants. There are many ways. I shall only mention some here. There is much, too much food eaten and wasted by the well-to-do.

"Use one grain at a time. *Chapati*, rice, and pulses, milk, ghee, *gur* and oil are used in the ordinary households besides vegetables and fruit. I regard this as an unhealthy combination. Those who get animal protein in the shape of milk, cheese, eggs or meat need not use pulses at all. The poor people get only vegetable protein. If the well-to-do give up pulses and oils, they set free these two essentials for the poor who get neither animal protein nor animal fat. Then the grain eaten should not be sloppy. Half the quantity suffices when it is eaten dry and not dipped in any gravy. It is well to eat it with raw salads such as onion, carrot, radish, salad leaves, tomatoes. One ounce or two of salads serves the purpose of eight ounces of cooked vegetables. *Chapatis* or bread should not be eaten with milk. To begin with, one meal may be raw vegetables, *chapati* or bread, and the other cooked vegetables with milk or curds.

"Sweet dishes should be eliminated altogether. Instead sugar or *gur* in small quantities may be taken with milk or bread or by itself.

"Fresh fruit is good to eat, but only a little is necessary to give tone to the system. It is an expensive article and an over-indulgence by the well-to-do has deprived the poor and the ailing of an article which they need much more than the well-to-do.

"Any medical man who has studied the science of dietetics will certify that what I have suggested can do no harm to the body, on the contrary, it must conduce to better health.

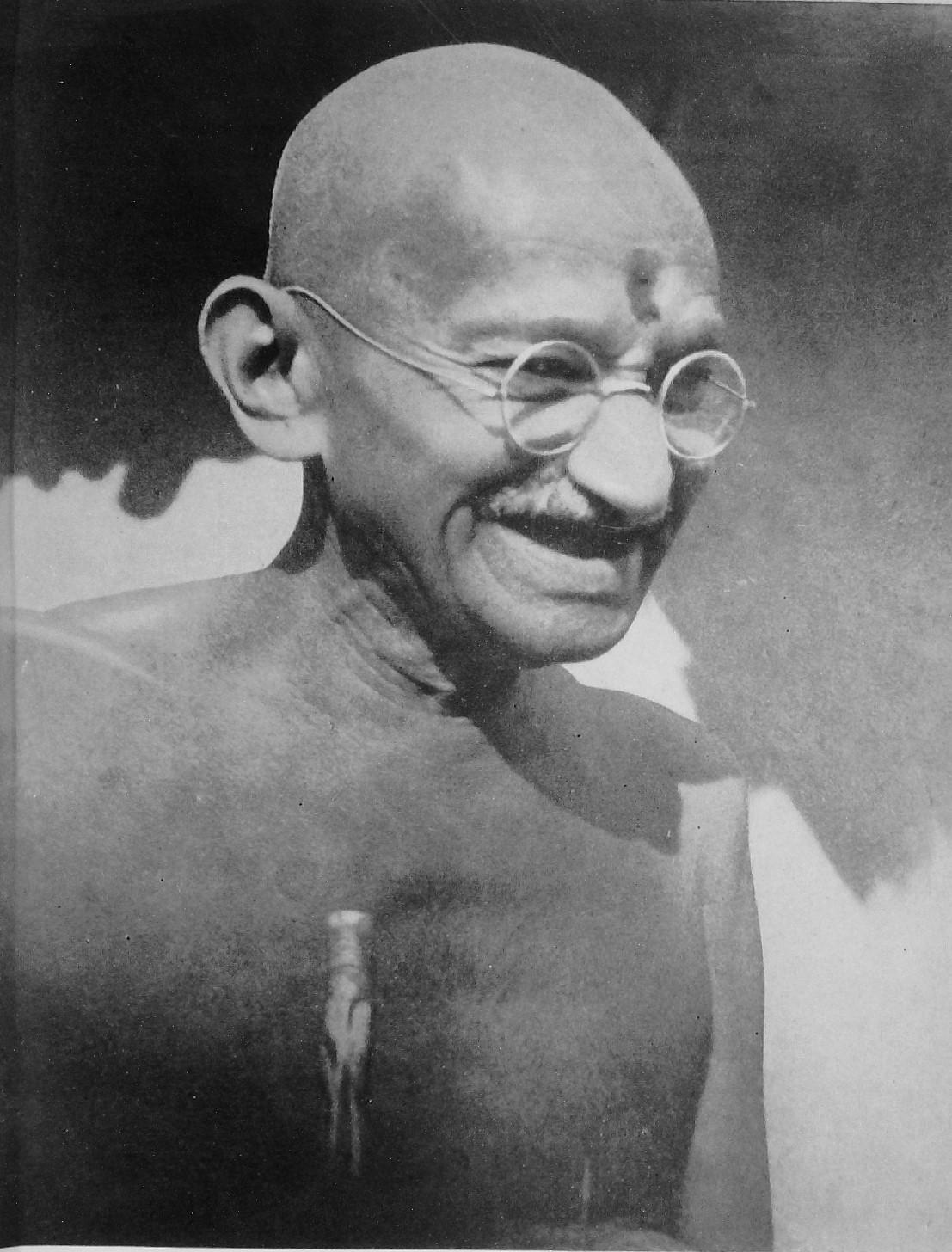
"This is only one way of saving foodstuff. It is obvious. But by itself, it cannot produce much visible effect.

"Grain-dealers have to shed their greed and the habit of making as much profit as possible. They must be satisfied with as little as possible. They run the risk of being looted, if they do not gain the credit of being keepers of grain for the sake of the poor. They should be in touch with the people in their neighbourhood. Congressmen have to visit the grain-dealers within their beat and give them the message of the time.

"By far the most important part of the work consists in educating the villagers to keep what they have and to induce cultivation of fresh crops wherever water is available. This requires the widespread and intelligent propaganda. It is not generally known that the bananas, potatoes, beetroot, yam and *suran*, and, in a measure, pumpkin are a food crop easily grown. They can take the place of bread in time of need.

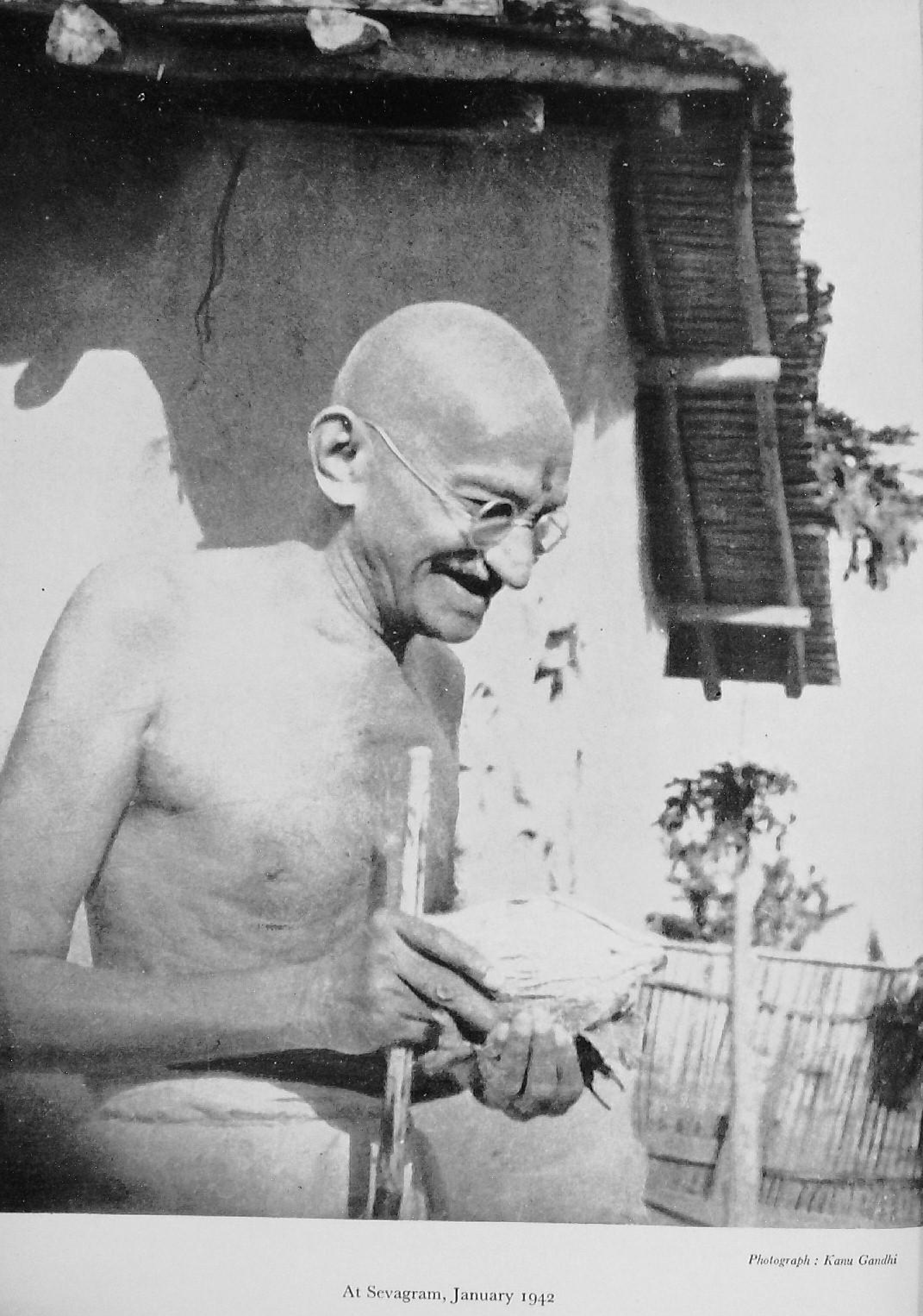
"There is too scarcity of money. There may be grain available but no money to buy it with. There is no money because there is no employment. This has to be found. Spinning is the readiest and the handiest. But local needs may supply other sources of labour. Every available source has to be tapped, so that there is no want of employment. Only the lazy ones need and must starve. Patient handling will induce even this class to shed their laziness.

"The problem of clothing is much easier than feeding, if it is handled well and in time. The mills may not be relied on in these times. There is ample cotton to be had in India. It is a problem for the cotton cultivators how to dispose of their stock. The outside market is closed to them. Our mills cannot absorb the whole of the cotton crop. It can be utilized, if the nation takes to spinning not for wages but for the sake of clothing the naked. Of course, those who need employment will spin for profit. This number must be limited. They need organizing. The profit motive being eliminated



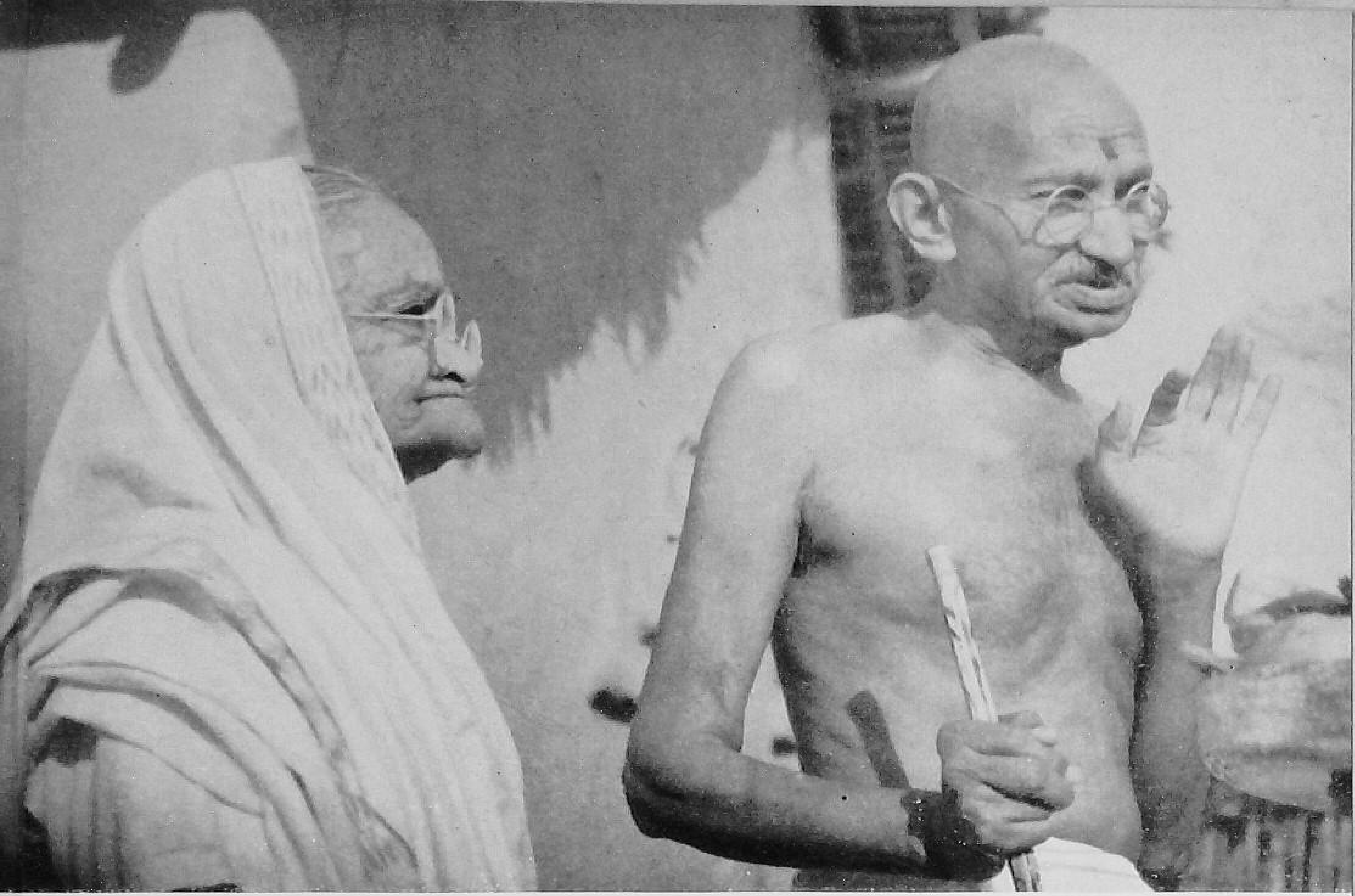
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi, January 1942



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

At Sevagram, January 1942



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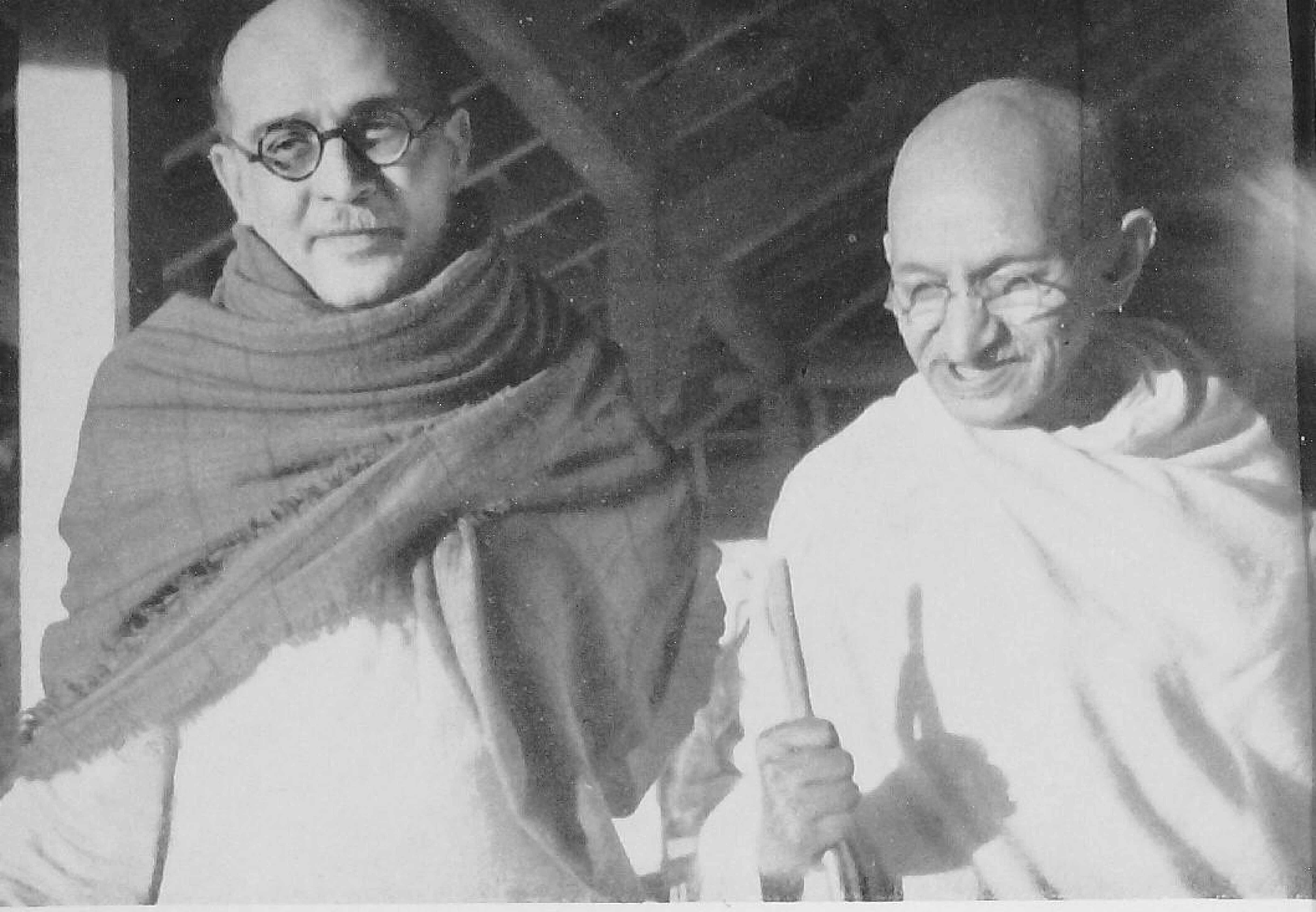
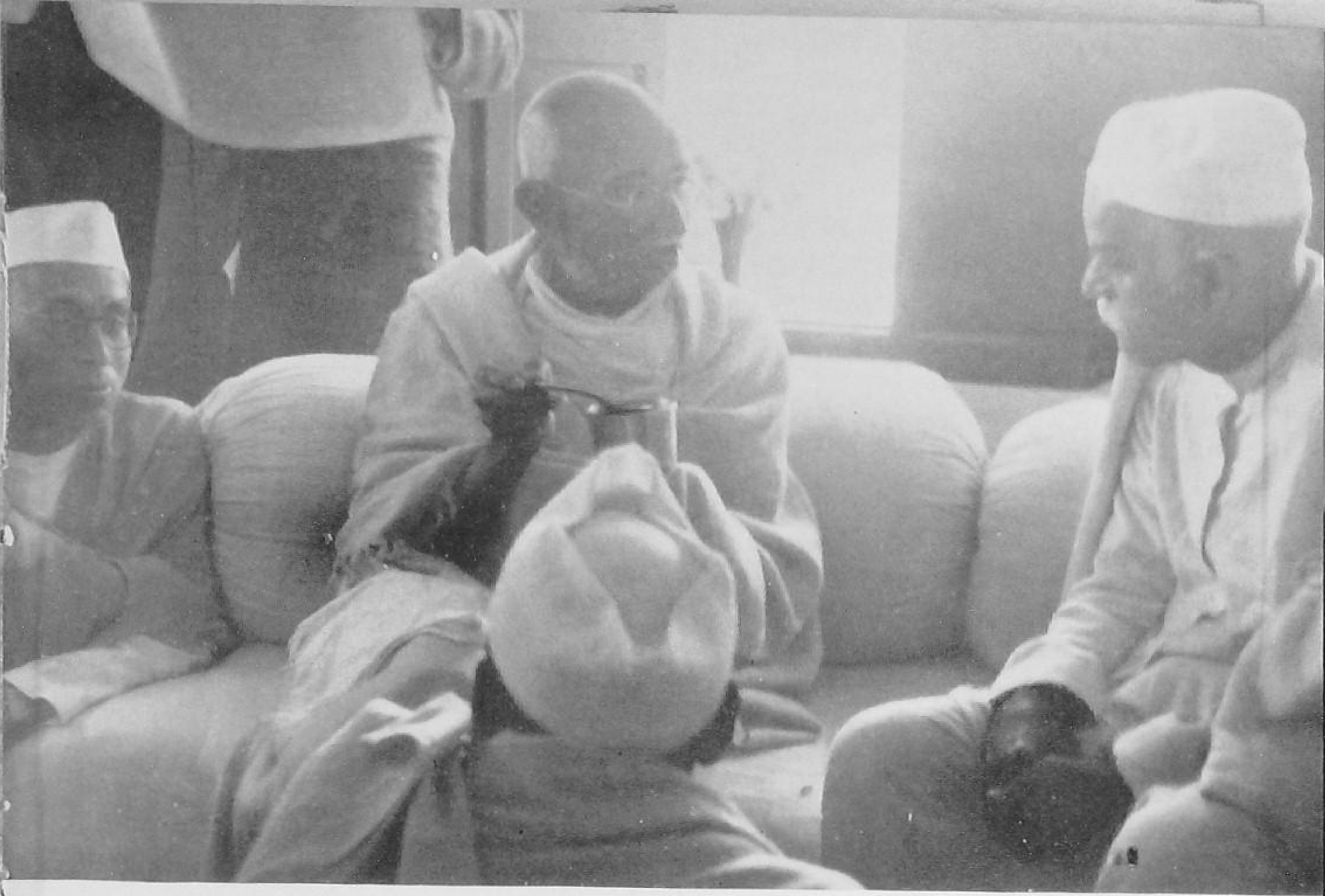
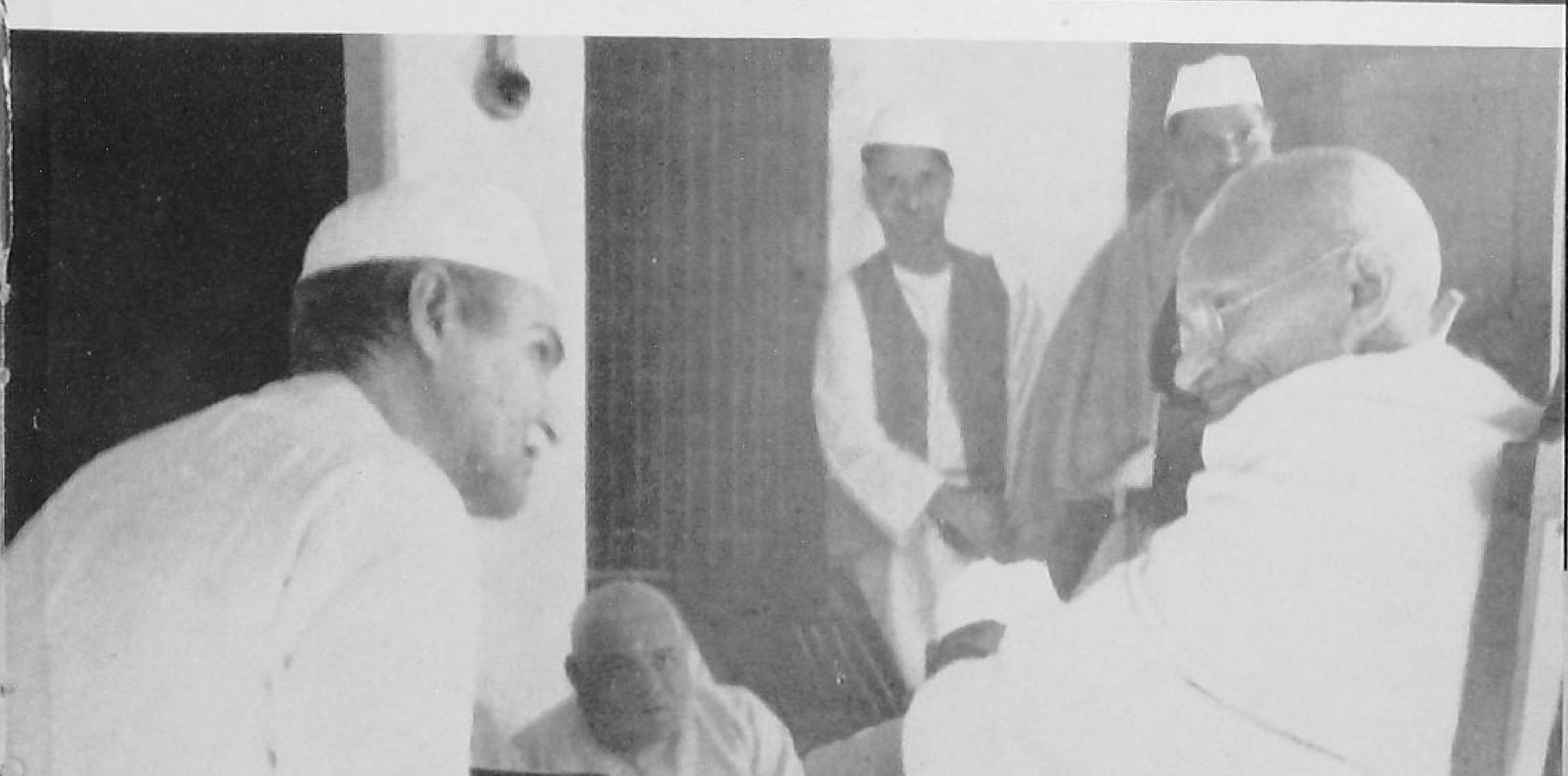
Gandhi and Kasturbai, Sevagram, January 1942



Photograph: Kanu Gandhi

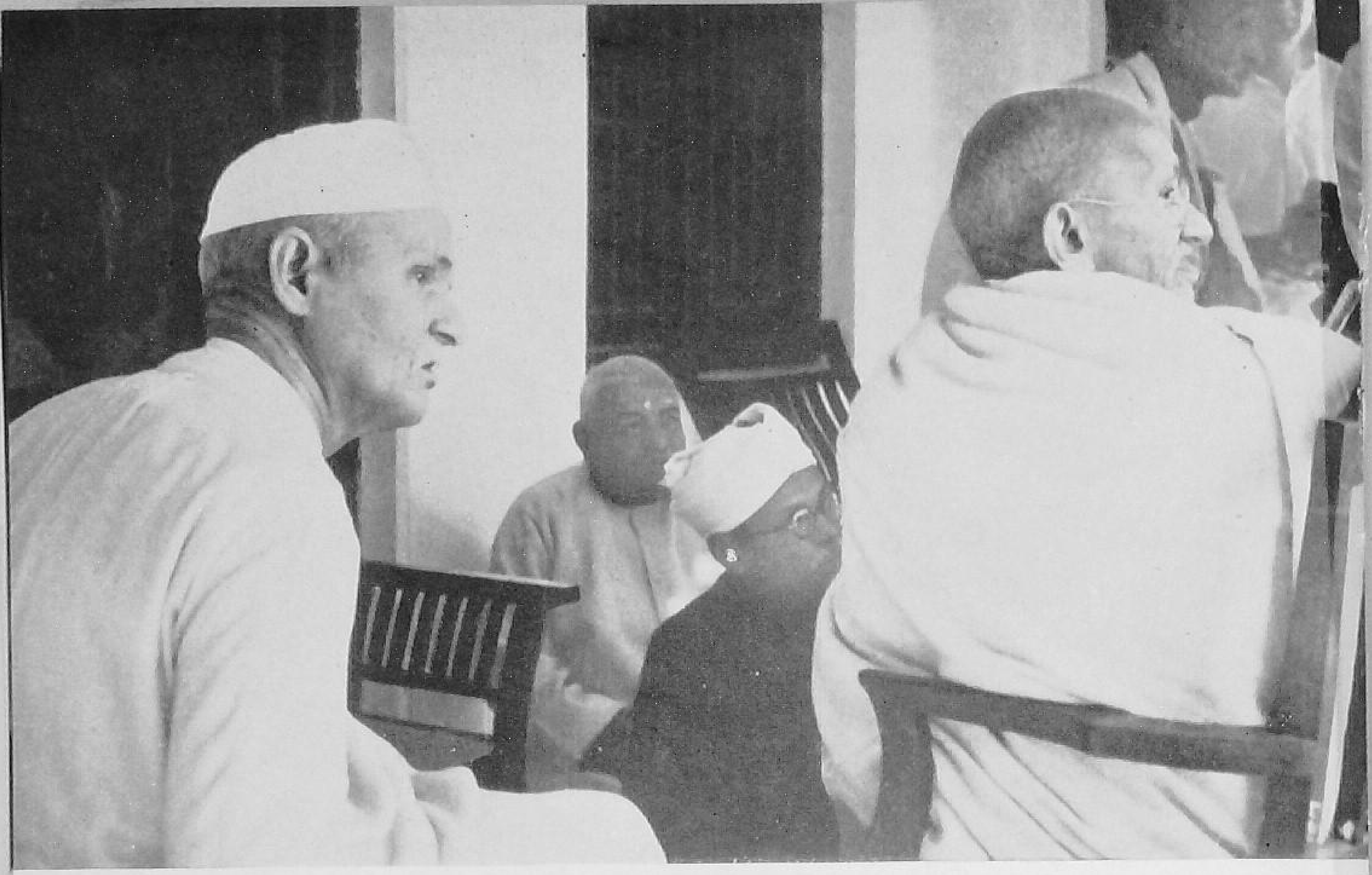
With Mahadev Desai, Sevagram, January 1942





Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

At Pandit Malaviya's residence in Benares, January 1942

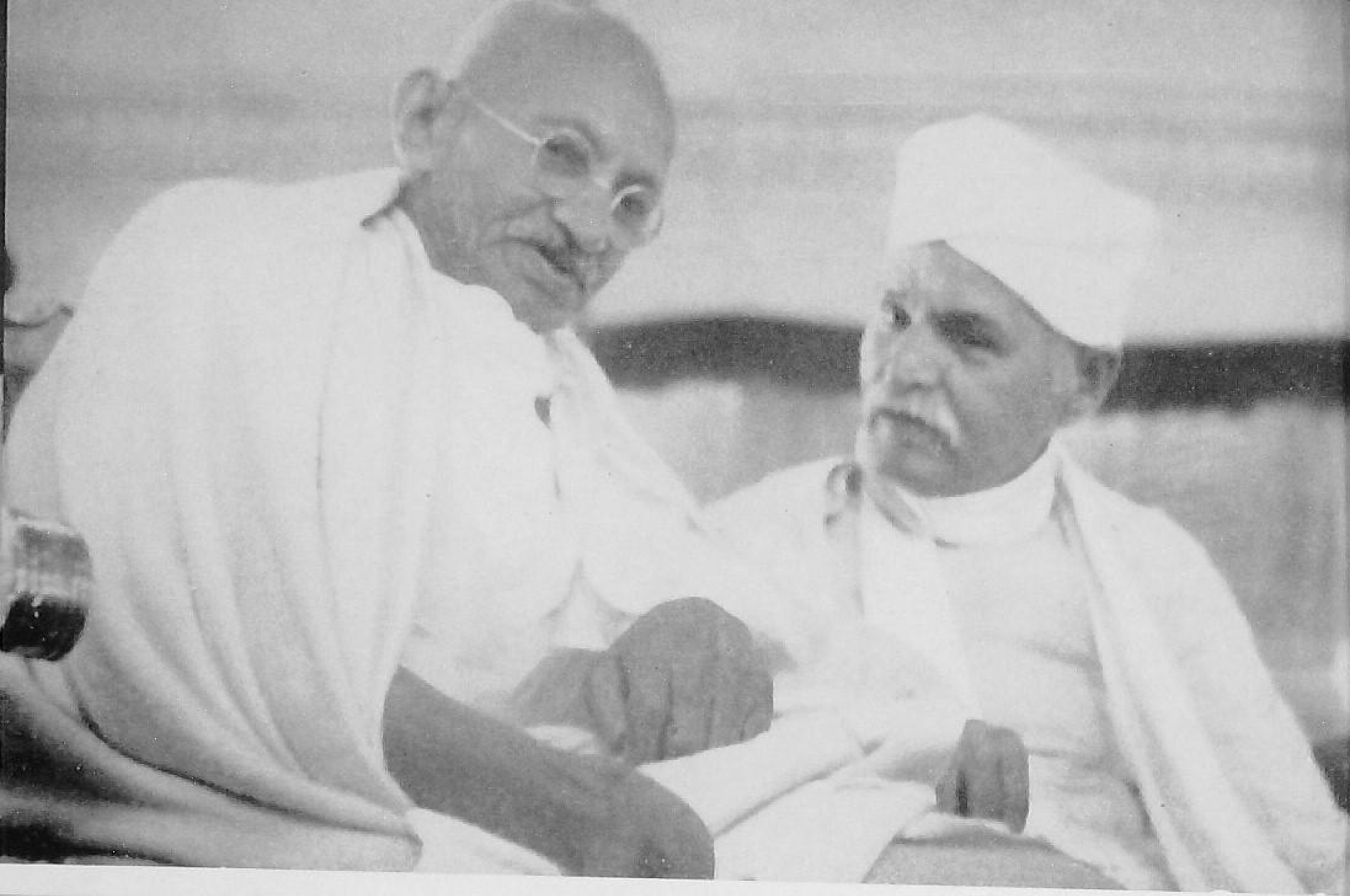


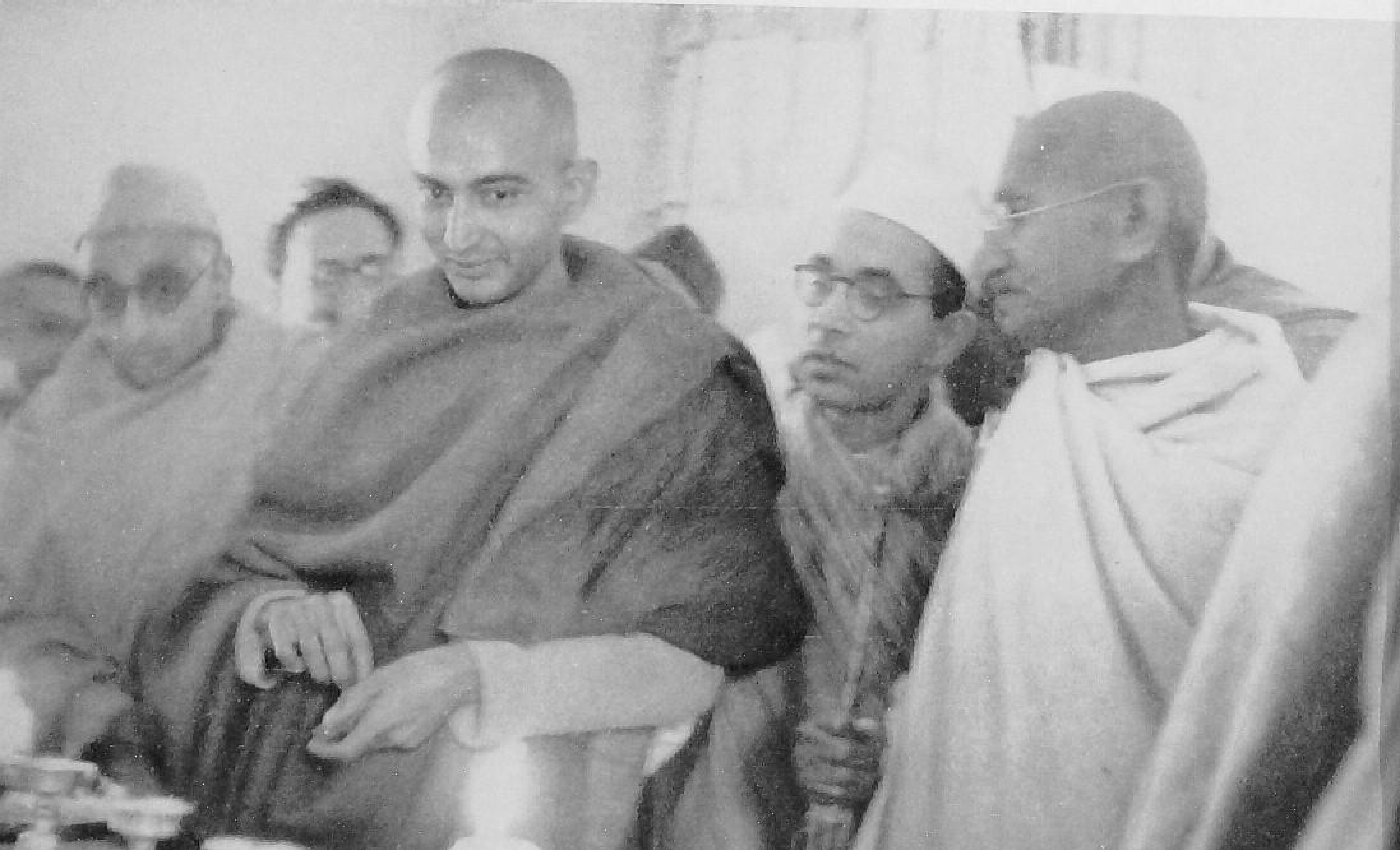
With Pandit Malaviya *Photograph : Kanu Gandhi*

Dr. Radhakrishnan greets Gandhi, Benares, January 1942 *From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Photograph : Felicita Studio

With Dr. Radhakrishnan, Benares, January 1942





Photographs : Kanu Gandhi

At the Silver Jubilee Convocation of the Hindu University, Benares, January 21, 1942

Gandhi's visit to the Buddhist Temple at Sarnath, January 1942

and the willingness being assumed, organization is reduced to the simplest terms.

"This is no time for multiplying the wheels. They take time to manufacture. Raw material is daily becoming dearer. The wheels cannot be manufactured everywhere. Places where they are, can be counted by the fingers of one hand.

"Therefore, I suggest the plying of the *dhanush takli* and even the simple *takli*. The former should be manufactured locally. Indeed, it is difficult to manufacture the simple *takli* at once in lakhs. The *dhanush takli* is the only thing which can be the easiest manufactured. Slivers cannot be supplied to the spinners. Each one should get some cotton for himself or herself, and card it as well as may be with the hand or with a home-made small bow such as the children in the Bihar basic schools have. All this can be done because no one is expected to manufacture a large quantity of yarn. If every one of our available millions span for one hour daily, there would be enough yarn to keep every handloom going. The reader should know that there are lakhs of handloom weavers in the land. There is danger of their starving for want of yarn.

"Here is a great task for every Congressman to undertake. He has to become a good spinner and carder and know how to manufacture the *dhanush takli*. Let every Congressman begin with himself, his family and neighbours, and he will find that the life-giving contagion spreads like wild fire which envelops you, before you hardly know what you are witnessing.

"Any organization that tackles these two problems successfully will command the love and confidence of the people. I hope that all will join in this real war effort. It is none the less effective, because it is peaceful and constructive.

"Will the princes let their people do this work without let or hindrance? Will Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah allow the members of the League to co-operate with the Congress workers in this truly national but non-political work which is also humanitarian? There are 23,000 Muslim spinners, carders, and weavers earning their daily bread through the A.-I.S.A."

On the way to Benares, Gandhi wrote another article entitled "Communal Unity":

"Freedom will not come through the parliamentary effort. Therefore, communal pacts, whilst they are good if they can be had, are

valueless unless they are backed by the union of hearts. Without it there can be no peace in the land. Even Pakistan can bring no peace, if there is no union of hearts. This union can come only by mutual service and co-operative work.

"Separate electorates have resulted in the separation of hearts. They presupposed mutual distrust and conflict of interests. They have tended to perpetuate differences and deepen the distrust.

"How to get out of the tangle is the question. I want just now to confine myself to the four Muslim majority provinces. In them, there is natural Pakistan in the sense that the permanent majority can rule the minority. I hold it to be utterly wrong to divide man from man by reason of religion which is liable to change. What conflict of interest there can be between Hindus and Muslims in the matter of revenue, sanitation, police, justice or the use of public conveniences? The difference can only be in religious usage and observances with which a secular state has no concern.

"Congressmen, if they are not to merge in the Hindus as Hindus, must rigidly abstain from the legislatures and local bodies governed by separate electorates. In these provinces, the separate electorates must be taken to have come from the Hindu demand and in the supposed Hindu interest. But a Congress Hindu has no interest apart from his Muslim brother. Therefore, he must not enter the electoral bodies where Hindu and Muslim interests are falsely regarded as separate and even antagonistic. If he enters these bodies he can do so only to divide the majority members, to take sides with one Muslim party or another. If I could make all the Hindus Congress-minded, I would withdraw every Hindu member from these bodies and put the Muslim members on their honour. And I would seek to influence them from outside these bodies by being friends with them and rendering disinterested service. I would be indifferent to their manning all the services. At the most, an infinitesimal percentage can have a share in them. And it is superstition to suppose that these services can oppress a people who have become conscious of human dignity and human rights and know how to enforce them. Since the vast majority of Congressmen are Hindus in at least three Muslim majority provinces, they have a rare opportunity of showing undefiled nationalism in these provinces. They will incidentally show other minorities that they have nothing to fear from the majorities if they know the true way. We

must get out of the miasma of religious majorities and minorities. Why is a Parsi's interest different from a Hindu's or Muslim's, so far as the state is concerned? Did not Dadabhai and Pherozeshah rule the Congress while they lived, not by Congress grace or patronage, but by right of service and merit? Did their rule injure any Hindu or Muslim interest? Were these interests ever in conflict on the Congress platform? Is not the Congress a voluntary state?"

On the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Convocation of the Benares Hindu University on January 21, Gandhi addressed the audience in Hindustani:

"Great as are Pandit Malaviyaji's services to the country, I have no doubt that the Hindu University constitutes his greatest service and achievement, and he has worn himself out for the work that is dear to him as life itself. It was out of my great regard for him that twenty-five years ago I accepted his invitation to attend the foundation ceremony of this university. I knew that the august function, which was to be attended by the Viceroy and the ruling princes of India, there was no place for a poor man like me. I had not then been made a 'Mahatma', and if anyone called me by that name I knew I must have been mistaken for Mahatma Munshiramji, as the late Swami Shraddhanandji was then called. For, there cannot be a number of mahatmas, and I knew even when I was in South Africa that Munshiramji's great work had entitled him to that name. But Malaviyaji has a knack for detecting servants of the people, however obscure they may be.

"Everyone knows that there is no greater beggar than Malaviyaji on the face of the earth. He has never begged for himself, by the grace of God he has never been in want, but he became a voluntary beggar for causes he has made his own, and God has always filled his bowl in an overflowing measure. But he has an insatiable appetite, and although he got the crore he wanted he is still asking for more. Even at this moment, Malaviyaji whispered into my ears that he had a good donation from the Maharaja of Darbhanga, our chairman.

"It is a rare good fortune to have him still in our midst, a living example of a pure life of plain living and high thinking; but I have a fear that though he is physically in your midst, many of you are untouched by his great example. The fault is wholly yours, not his. The sun radiates heat and light to all on earth, but how can

even the sun help those who will shut themselves from him? But I am not here to sing Malaviyaji's praise. This platform has rung with them. He has deserved them all. I must now address a few words to you the teachers and the students of the university. When I accepted Sir Radhakrishnan's invitation, he had asked me to send a copy of my address to him. I told him that I had no time to write anything, I did not even know what I should be able to say. A feeling of nervousness overpowers me, when I am in the midst of learned men. Ever since my return to India, my lot has been cast among the poor and the downtrodden—those whom the Congress represents—and whilst in their midst I feel no sense of constraint or of hesitation. In your midst, I feel tongue-tied. I simply said to Sir Radhakrishnan that I should trust to the inspiration of the moment. That inspiration has come, but I do not know how you will welcome my plain speaking.

"As speaker after speaker spoke and left the platform, I longed for someone who would address the audience in Hindi or in Urdu, in Hindustani, aye, even in Sanskrit, even in Marathi, or for that matter any of the Indian languages. But no such good luck befell me and you. Why? We are slaves and have hugged the language of those who have kept us enslaved. It has become a fashion to blame the Englishmen for all our ills. I have not hesitated to blame them for many things they have done. I have never charged them with compelling us to adopt English as the medium of expression. We devote precious years of our lives to learning the English language, our ambition being to be able to speak English as Englishmen, and our breast swells with pride when an Englishman pats us on our back for speaking flawless English. Think of the time and energy of our youth expended on learning the English language, as if it was our mother tongue, and calculate by simple multiplication the number of the years and the volume of precious energy that are lost to the nation.

"And yet, all this is happening in the Benares Hindu University which has been extolled today as the living embodiment of Indian culture. Malaviyaji did all that was necessary to draw the best possible teachers by attractive salaries, but he could not do the rest. It was not his fault; Hindi did not take the place of English. The teachers are products of the tradition which they have inherited, and the students are content to accept what they get from them.

They need not be. They go on strikes and even on hunger-strikes often for trivial reasons. Why will they not insist on having their tuition in the all-India language? There are, we were told today, 250 students here from the Andhra Province. Let them go to Sir Radhakrishnan and ask for an Andhra section of the university and ask to be taught through the medium of Telugu, if they will not learn the all-India language.

"You know what has happened in Japan—a country which I do not regard as essentially great—but which is regarded as great in Asia, in that it has successfully challenged the supremacy of the western nations. The thousands of boys and girls in the Japanese schools and colleges receive their education not through the medium of English but through Japanese. Their script is difficult, but it is no bar to their learning it and they have not given it up in preference to the Roman. Not that they boycott English and other European languages. But they economize their energy. Those who need to learn them do so for enriching the Japanese thought and knowledge which the West alone can give. They take care to turn into Japanese all that is worth taking from the West. That is because the mind of Japan's youth is fresh and alert. The knowledge gained thus has become national property. Our ambition does not go beyond becoming clerks in Government offices, lawyers, barristers, judges, all helplessly serving the system they would fain destroy. And we have not succeeded either in mastering the English language. I get numerous letters from English-educated people—some of them possessing the highest degrees of our universities—but they betray a woeful ignorance of the English language. The reason is simple. Malaviyajis and Radhakrishnans are rare; the thousands cannot achieve what they have done.

"As I was listening to the English speeches, I was amazed at the patience and innate courtesy of our people, who, though they do not understand a word of what is said, do not mob us, as they well might do. If there is any doubt in your minds about this, I can demonstrate to you by a show of hands how few, even from among the students, have followed the proceedings here.

"There is another thing to which I am tempted to draw your attention. I witnessed this morning a scene that I had least expected here. There was the Vasant Panchami day procession of the students who had to march past Malaviyaji's house after receiving

his silent blessings. The way in which they were walking betrayed a lack of even elementary physical training. Instead of walking in step, erect and disciplined like soldiers on the march, they walked haphazardly in a desultory fashion.

"I cannot help saying a word about the sight that greets you as you enter the great portals of the university. Thanks to the money that Malaviyaji can get for the asking, the gate is in consonance with the splendour of the edifices here. But what did I find on the top of the gate? The bulk of the space, three-fourths, taken up by the words 'Benares Hindu University' in English, and the fourth given to the inscription in Hindi, which is the language through which you would derive your knowledge. I wondered what need was there of the English language? Just a little thought on the part of those who were in charge of such things would have been enough to tell them that what was needed there was the name written in the Devanagari and Persian scripts, which would have symbolized to the people the desire on the part of Malaviyaji's university and Sir Radhakrishnan for communal harmony. It would have been in the fitness of things too, as both Hindi and Urdu are understood in these parts and both the scripts are familiar. The fact is the years we have wasted on English have ossified our minds and stunted our memory and imagination.

"Surely, it is no difficult thing for a non-Hindi-speaking person to learn Hindi or Hindustani. I can undertake to teach Hindi to anyone knowing Gujarati or Bengali or Marathi in the space of three months. Even the South Indian languages—Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kanarese—are full of Sanskrit words, and if there was just a little fervour and love of the country in us, we should not hesitate to decide to write all the Sanskrit-derived languages as also the southern group in the Devanagari script. These languages have not only a fairly common vocabulary, there is also a striking resemblance in the scripts. If our minds were not fagged, we would easily know half a dozen of Indian languages. Then there is Urdu which should not be difficult to learn, if only our Urdu scholars did not make it a matter of pride to pack it with Persian and Arabic words, as the pundits pack Hindi with Sanskrit words.

"One more thought I should like to leave with you. Every university is supposed to have its tradition and its distinctive feature—Oxford and Cambridge, for instance, have theirs. But I am afraid

our universities are the blotting-sheets of the West. We have borrowed the superficial features of the western universities, and have flattered ourselves that we have founded living universities here. Do they reflect or respond to the needs of the masses? Now I am told that a special feature of your university is that engineering and technology are taught here as nowhere else in India. I should not consider this a distinguishing feature. Let me suggest one to you. Have you been able to attract to your university the youths from Aligarh? Have you been able to identify yourselves with them? And that, I think, would be your special work, the special contribution of your university. Money has come in, and more will come in, if God keeps Malaviyaji in our midst for a few more years. But no amount of money will achieve the miracle I want—I mean a heart unity between the Hindus and Muslims. I would like you to go out to invite the Muslims to come here, and not to mind if they reject your advances. You are the representatives of a great civilization which according to Lokamanya Tilak is ten thousand years old and according to later scholars even older. The special contribution of that civilization is to befriend the world, to turn the so-called foes into friends. Our civilization has absorbed, like the holy Ganges, many streams from outside, and it is my prayer that the Hindu University which is endeavouring to represent the Hindu culture and the Hindu civilization may invite and absorb all that is best in other cultures and be a model to all of communal unity and harmony. That should be its distinctive feature. The English language will not help you to evolve this. It is our own ancient learning that will teach you this—our scriptures learnt and understood in the proper spirit.

"One thing more and I have done. You are living in the palatial hostels, but look at the little house in which Panditji lives in utter simplicity and without the least splendour. You enter his room. There is no decoration and only barest furniture. You, who will be his heirs, should model your own lives accordingly. Many of you are children of poor parents. Don't forget that you have to represent the poor, and that, therefore, a life of ease and luxury is inconsistent with the poverty of our land. May you be all models of plain and simple living and high thinking like Malaviyaji. May God bless you with long life and the wisdom to carry out what I have said, if it has appealed to you."

The next day Gandhi addressed the U. P. Congress workers who had gathered in Benares to get their doubts cleared.

"You have permitted khadi shops to sell blankets to Government. Is it not co-operation in the war effort?" asked a worker.

"I did," said Gandhi. "It was not proper for me to ask whether the blankets were for the use of the soldiers or for someone else. The case is different when a man sells the fire-arms or swords or poison. The vendor has to inquire how fire-arms are to be used, and the chemist has to ask for the doctor's certificate. On the other hand, a rice-seller will not, and is under no obligation to, inquire who is going to consume the rice. But you may go further than I did. If you think I erred, you are at liberty to denounce me. If you think that a non-violent man may not sell rice or blankets to soldiers, you are welcome to your interpretation of non-violence. I for one will not hesitate to give water or food to a soldier who comes to me with hands red with murder. My humanity would not let me do otherwise."

The next question was about Congressmen's duty in the times of raids and scares and consequent disturbances.

"The emergency is there today," replied Gandhi. "Dacoities are rampant, and unless the Congress assets itself effectively, the situation will go out of our hands. The need for peace brigades never was more urgent than now. The risk of death is there, whether you choose violence or non-violence. Why not then prepare yourselves to die non-violently? It will also enable you to offer effective resistance in case of a civil war. As for the protection of the wounded in air raids, the bulk of the work will come upon yourselves. You will not join the A.R.P., simply because you will be then the parts of a machine over which you have no control and you would be the active participants in the war effort. But it is certain that the Government will not be able to render assistance everywhere. Did they do so in Rangoon? We have harrowing tales of the dead and wounded lying on the streets of Rangoon uncared for. Wherever, therefore, the authorities fail there will be enough scope of work for us. We have to prepare the volunteers for this work ready to take risks and to act with initiative. We may have to remove the dead and wounded, take charge of the vacant houses, and so on. In this work you will heartily co-operate with the authorities wherever they will accept your co-operation."

"We should like to have a glimpse of the next six months or a year as you picture it to yourself," said the workers. "You have often said that this is a fight to the finish, your last fight which will not end until the goal is won. What are likely to be the future developments as you can visualize them?" Gandhi replied:

"It is a good question, and also a difficult question. Not that I am not clear, but because it takes us into the realm of speculation. I let things and happenings react on me—though I confess that I do not follow everything as Jawaharlal with his study of foreign affairs can. Jawaharlal is convinced that the British Empire is finished. We all wish that it may be finished, but I don't think it is finished. We know that the Britishers are tough fighters, we know what the empire, especially India, means to every home in Britain, and that, therefore, they will never consent to be 'Little Englanders'. Mr. Churchill has said that they are not 'sugar candies', and that they can meet rough with rough. Therefore, it will be long before the empire is finished. There is no doubt, however, that they are nearing the end, and what Jawaharlal has said is very true that, if we could do nothing to prevent the war, we certainly will do much to prevent a peace in which we have no voice. And that is what every Congressman has to bear in mind. We have, therefore, to be up and doing. If we sit with folded hands, we may have a peace which we do not desire.

"I adhere to the statement that it is my final fight, but we have had to alter our programme because of the latest development, because war has come to our door. The suspension had nothing to do with my retirement from the official leadership of the Congress. Even if it had continued, how could I today ask Jawaharlal to march back to jail? Of course, he will be in jail, if he is prevented from doing the work that we have chalked out. But things have happened so rapidly that we had not the slightest idea of what was coming. How then can I talk of a year or even six months ahead? That we are marching swiftly towards independence, I have no doubt. There is no doubt about the programme ahead of us. No Congressman should rest content with just paying his four-anna fee. He has to be active all the twenty-four hours. Even the one concrete programme of production of cloth is sufficient to occupy all our energies. There are about 4,000 students in the Benares Hindu University. Will they spin an hour every day? I am talking

of spinning because it is a thing nearest my heart, but there are a hundred and one other things. Have the villagers enough food to eat? Have they enough to cover themselves in this bitter cold? These are the questions that occur to me again and again. On our capacity to feed the starving and clothe the naked and generally to serve the masses in the time of their need will depend our capacity to influence the peace, whenever it comes. What I have said applies to all parties. Whoever serves the purpose best will survive and have an effective voice."

On the way to Wardha, Gandhi pursued the topic of his Hindu University address in an article entitled "Hindustani" written on January 23:

"The Congress has to perform the Herculean task of displacing English with Hindustani. With the passing of the resolution, it should have created a bureau for fulfilling the purpose as it might do even now. But if it does not, individual Congressmen and those who are interested in evolving an all-India language should do so.

"But what is Hindustani? There is no such language apart from Hindi and Urdu. It could only mean scientific blend of Hindi and Urdu. There is no such written blend extant. But it is the common speech of the unlettered millions of Hindus and Muslims living in Northern India. Not being written, it is imperfect, and the written language has taken two different turns tending to widen the difference by each running away from the other. Therefore, the word Hindustani means Hindi and Urdu. Therefore, also Hindi can call itself Hindustani, if it does not exclude Urdu but tries to assimilate Urdu, as much as is scientifically possible, without damaging the natural structure and music of the original. Urdu can do likewise. There is no separate Hindustani body attempting to blend the two streams which today threaten to run away from each other. . .

"It is unfortunate that the Hindi-Urdu question has assumed a communal shape. It is possible for either party to undo this mischief by recognizing the other and by incorporating the acceptable part in a generous spirit. A language that borrows unstintingly from the others, without harming its special characteristic, will be enriched, even as the English language has become enriched by free borrowings."

On February 1, Gandhi inaugurated the All-India Goseva Sangh Conference at Wardha. "We catch cow by the tail," he observed

"and sanctify our eyes with its sacred touch. We regard even her urine as sacred and full of medicinal value and drink it. Alas, the poor cow is innocent of all this worship, and so our worship is lost on her. It even scares her. When it scares her, she answers our attentions with a kick; when she is not scared she suffers us."

"All this is too true," he said, "and those who claim to protect the cow betray a criminal ignorance of the real method of protecting her and her progeny. Those who claim to worship the cow ill-treat the bullocks cruelly. Chaunde Maharaj has been working at the problem assiduously for years, but whilst he accepts my facts and even argument, he says, 'What about the public sentiment? They somehow want to save the cow from the butcher.' But they go about the wrong way and succeed in defeating the very object they are trying to achieve. I do not say this in a carping spirit, but shocking ignorance, and want of understanding of the essentials of the problem betrayed by most of the people who run our pinjrapoles dismay me."

He also referred to the wrong way of protecting the cow from a Muslim wanting to slaughter her, and said that he would repeat *ad nauseam* that to quarrel with a Muslim and to kill him in order to protect the cow was to instigate more slaughter.

He next referred to the difficulty of procuring pure cow's milk and ghee: "The whole milk and ghee trade is in the hands of the Hindus. But have we been able to ensure a supply of pure milk and ghee? The milk is adulterated, and even the water used for adulteration is not clean. The cruel and criminal process of *phooka* is well known. The ghee sold in the market can often be described as poison rather than ghee. The butter we get from New Zealand, Australia or Denmark is guaranteed pure cow's butter, but there is no guarantee about butter or ghee available here. There is not a shop in Wardha, where some of us are keen on this problem, where one could go and buy a seer of cow's ghee of guaranteed purity."

"Every animal should be protected," he added, "but unless we protect the one that was most valuable in national economy, other animals could not be protected. In our neglect of the cow, we had brought both the cow and the buffalo at death's door. I, therefore, say, that, if I can really protect the cow by adopting proper ways and means, I would protect the rest of animals. But, it can be done only if we know the true science and economy of it. I am

amazed at our partiality for buffalo's milk and ghee. Our economics is short-sighted. We look at the immediate gain, but then we don't realize that in the last analysis, cow is the more valuable animal. Cow's butter (and ghee) has a naturally yellowish colour which indicates its superiority to buffalo's butter (and ghee) in carotene. It has a flavour all its own. Foreign visitors who come to Sevagram go into raptures over the pure cow's milk they get there. Buffalo's milk and butter are almost unknown in Europe. It is only in India that one finds a prejudice in favour of buffalo's milk and ghee. This has spelt all but extinction of the cow, and that is why I say that, unless we put an exclusive emphasis on the cow, she cannot be saved. It is a tragedy that all cows and buffaloes put together cannot give us enough milk for the forty crores of our people. We ought to realize the value of the cow as a good milker and the only source of draught and agricultural cattle. And how far is one to pamper popular prejudices? A cow proves valuable even if she dies, if we would make use of the skin, the bone, the fleshing, the entrails and so on. Today, in many places, they bury the dead cows or sell them away for our own fault. If we treated the hide properly, if we knew the manurial value of the fleshing, and the use of the bone and entrails, which we are demonstrating at Nalwadi, there would be no carrion eating."

He then referred to the question of pinjrapoles: "Ever since my return to India from South Africa, I have been harping on the question of the reform of pinjrapoles. Unless we realize and define their proper functions, they are sure to remain the economic waste they are. Their proper function is to take care of the dry, old and disabled cows, of which the individual owners cannot possibly take care—certainly not in the town and cities. Their function is not that of dairy—though they may run a separate dairy if they can—but the care of the old and the disabled animals, and to provide the raw material for a tannery. There should be a well-equipped tannery attached to every pinjrapole. They should maintain the best stud bulls and loan them out for public use, they should provide every facility for the humane and the scientific castration of bulls to be turned into bullocks, and there should be instruction centres for the agriculturist and the dairymen. Here is plenty of scope for our agricultural and dairy graduates who should receive additional training for the special work and then be attached to

every one of our pinjrapoles. All the pinjrapoles should be the central institution for expert advice, the collection and co-ordination of information and statistics, and so on."

The depth of his feelings was mirrored in the concluding part of his address:

"Today the cow is on the brink of extinction, and I am not certain that our efforts will ultimately succeed. But if she dies, we also die along with her—we, our civilization, I mean our essentially non-violent and rural civilization. We have, therefore, to make our choice. We can choose to be violent and kill all uneconomic cattle. Like Europe, we should then breed our cattle for the purposes of milk and meat. But our civilization is fundamentally different. Our life is wrapped up in our animals. Most of our villagers live with their animals, often under the same roof. Both live together, both starve together. Often the owner starves the poor cattle, exploits them, ill-treats them, unmercifully extracts work out of them. But if we reform our ways, we can both be saved. Otherwise, we sink together, and it is just as well that we swim or sink together.

"The question today is to solve the problem of our starvation and poverty, but I have confined myself to the problem of the starvation and poverty of our cattle. Our *rishis* showed us the sovereign remedy. 'Protect the cow,' they said, 'and you protect all.' We have to add to the talents they have left us, and not to waste them. We have invited experts and we shall make every use of their advice. Nothing that we laymen say is final, we shall get the experts to test it with their knowledge and experience. We shall, therefore, always seek their advice and invite their criticism."

Commenting on the conference, he wrote:

"The most important question for consideration was whether cow farming should be in the hands of individuals or done collectively. I myself had no hesitation in saying that she could never be saved by individual farming. Her salvation, and with her that of buffalo, could only be brought about by collective endeavour. It is quite impossible for an individual farmer to look after the welfare of his cattle in his own home in a proper and scientific manner. Amongst other causes, lack of collective effort has been a principal cause of the deterioration of the cow and hence of cattle in general.

"The world today is moving towards the ideal of collective or co-operative effort in every department of life. Much in this line

has been and is being accomplished. It has come into our country also, but in such a distorted form that our poor have not been able to reap its benefits. *Pari passu* with the increase in population, land holdings of an average farmer are daily decreasing. Moreover, what the individual possesses is often fragmentary. For such farmers, to keep cattle in their homes is a suicidal policy; and yet this is their condition today. Those who give the first place to economics and pay scant attention to religious, ethical or humanitarian considerations proclaim from the house-tops that the farmer is being devoured by his cattle due to the cost of their feed which is out of all proportion to what they yield. They say it is folly not to slaughter wholesale all useless animals.

"What then should be done by the humanitarians is the question. The answer is to find a way whereby we may not only save the lives of our cattle but also see that they do not become a burden. I am sure that co-operative effort can help us in a large measure.

"The following comparison may be helpful:

"1. Under the collective system, no farmer can keep cattle in his house as he does today. They foul the air, and dirty the surroundings. There is neither intelligence nor humanitarianism in living with animals. Man was not meant to do so. The space taken up by the cattle today would be spared to the farmer and his family, if the collective system were adopted.

"2. As the number of cattle increases, life becomes impossible for the farmer in his home. Hence, he is obliged to sell the calves and to kill the male buffaloes or else turn them out to starve and die. This inhumanity would be averted, if the care of the cattle were undertaken on a co-operative basis.

"3. Collective cattle farming would ensure the supply of veterinary treatment to animals when they are ill. No ordinary farmer can afford this on his own.

"4. Similarly, one selected bull can be easily kept for the need of several cows under the collective system. This is impossible otherwise except for charity.

"5. Common grazing ground or land for exercising the animals will be easily available under the co-operative system, whereas today generally there is nothing of the kind for individual farmers.

"6. The expense on fodder will be comparatively far less under the collective system.

"7. The sale of milk at good prices will be greatly facilitated, and there will be no need or temptation for the farmer to adulterate it as he does as an individual.

"8. It is impossible to carry out the tests of the fitness of every head of cattle individually, but this could easily be done for the cattle of a whole village and would thus make it easier to improve the breed.

"9. The foregoing advantages should be sufficient argument in favour of co-operative cattle farming. The strongest argument in its favour is that individualistic system has been the means of making our own condition as well as that of our cattle pitiable. We can only save ourselves and them by making this essential change.

"I firmly believe too that we shall not derive the full benefits of agriculture until we take to co-operative farming. Does it not stand to reason that it is far better for a hundred families in a village to cultivate their lands collectively and divide the income therefrom than to divide the land anyhow into a hundred portions? And what applies to land applies equally to cattle.

"It is quite another matter that it may be difficult to convert people to adopt this way of life straight away. The straight and narrow road is always hard to traverse. Every step in the programme of cow service is strewn with thorny problems. But only by surmounting the difficulties, can we hope to make the path easier. My purpose for the time being is to show the great superiority of collective cattle farming over the individual effort. I hold further that the latter is wrong and the former only is right. In reality, even the individual effort has led to selfishness and to inhumanity, whereas the collective effort can abate both the evils, if it does not remove them altogether."

On February 11, Jamnalal Bajaj who had taken the burden of cow protection on his shoulders died. Gandhi wrote:

"In Jamnalal Bajaj, death has taken a mighty man. Whenever I wrote of wealthy men becoming trustees of their wealth for the common good, I always had this merchant prince principally in mind. If his trusteeship did not reach the ideal, the fault was not his. I deliberately restrained him. I did not want him in his enthusiasm to take a single step which in his cool moments he might regret. His simplicity was all his own. Every house he built for himself became a *dharmashala*. His contribution as a satyagrahi was of the

highest order. In political discussions, he held his own. His judgements were sound. As an act of renunciation, his last was the crown of all. He wanted to take up a constructive activity to which he could devote the rest of his life and in which he could use all his abilities. This was the preservation of the cattle wealth of India personified in the cow. He threw himself into the work with a singlemindedness and zeal I had never seen surpassed. His generosity knew no distinction of race, creed or colour. The country has lost one of the bravest of its servants."

"Never before," Gandhi observed, "have I felt so forlorn, except when Maganlal was snatched from me fourteen years ago. There is hardly any activity of mine in which I did not receive his full-hearted co-operation and in which it did not prove to be of the greatest value."

Non-Violent Resistance

1942

Events were moving with lightning speed. The allies suffered reverses both in Asia and Europe. "Suppose Germany wins," asked a correspondent, "with India not having entered war, would Hitler leave India alone?" To this, Gandhi replied:

"If the Nazis come to India, the Congress will give them the same fight that it has given Great Britain. I do not underrate the power of satyagraha as the questioner does. But that is pure speculation. Imperialism has kept its grip on India for more than 150 years. If it is overthrown by a worse type of rule, the Congress can have the negative satisfaction of knowing that no other 'ism' can possibly last beyond a few years, even if it establishes a foothold in India. That is as I read the Congress mind. Personally, I think the end of this giant war will be what happened in the fabled Mahabharata war. The Mahabharata has been aptly described by a Travancorean as the permanent history of man. What is described in that great epic is happening today before our very eyes. The warring nations are destroying themselves with such fury and ferocity that the end will be mutual exhaustion. The victor will share the same fate that awaited the surviving Pandavas. The mighty warrior Arjuna was looted in broad daylight by a petty robber. And out of this holocaust must arise a new order for which the exploited millions of toilers have so long thirsted. The prayers of peace-lovers cannot go in vain. Satyagraha is itself an unmistakable mute prayer of an agonized soul."

The debacle of the British forces in Burma was acutely felt in China. In February 1942, Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek visited Delhi and boldly addressed an outspoken appeal to Britain and India. The marshal appealed to the rulers to grant real political power to the Indians. Addressing India, he said: "At this most critical moment in the history of civilization our two peoples should

exert themselves in the cause of freedom for all mankind, for only in a free world, the Chinese and the Indian peoples obtain their freedom." The Viceroy invited Indian leaders to meet the marshal in Delhi, but Gandhi was not among the invitees. However, a private meeting was fixed at Calcutta in mid-February.

On the train to Calcutta, Gandhi wrote on "Plea for Calmness":

"The recent British reverses ought not to create panic in the land. In all the wars that Britain has fought or in which she has been engaged there have been reverses, some of which may be considered disastrous. But the British have a knack of surviving them and turning them into the stepping-stones to success. Hence the saying peculiar to them that they blunder through to success. Failures do not dismay or demoralize them. They take them with calmness and in a sportsmanlike spirit. Wars are for them a national game like football. The defeated team heartily congratulates the successful one almost as if it was a joint victory and drowns the sorrow of defeat in an exchange of glasses of whisky. If we have learnt nothing worth from the contact with the British, let us at least learn their calmness in the face of misfortunes.

"And is there the slightest cause for alarm? Certainly not for those who believe in non-violence. For, fear and distrust of self are no part of their composition, nor are they part of a panoplied soldier. The attribute of non-violence is perhaps only a copy-book maxim. We do not see it in actual practice in any measure. But this war is abundant proof that neither party, though steeped in violence, betrays any fear or distrust. I am filled with amazement and admiration at the reckless bravery displayed by combatants on either side. This war is a demonstration of the unthinkable nerve that the human beings are capable of possessing; looked at from either standpoint, therefore, we should be ashamed of fear, distrust and nervelessness in the face of danger. It is, therefore, the sacred duty of every worker to steel himself against cowardly panic and prevent its spread as far as he can. 'Cowards die many times before their death.' Let this not be proved of us.

"The true danger exists only for the cities. It may be very near due to the fall of Singapore and probable loss of Burma. One of the best precautions consists in those people who are not wanted in the cities or those who want to shun danger, migrating to the villages in an orderly manner. There should be no panicky rush. Those who

must remain in cities, whether for business or otherwise, should carry out instructions that may be issued by the authorities from time to time. Those who will not, for any reason whatsoever, should clear out in good time. If this simple precaution is taken, we may face the future without perturbation. More I cannot say, for we are a house divided against itself and there is no living bond between the rulers and the ruled. It is tragic but it is true. The tragedy is deepened by the knowledge that all parties feel so helpless."

On February 18, Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek called on Gandhi within an hour of his arrival in Calcutta. The plan was to have a sort of courtesy meeting and then for both to meet again in the afternoon. The idea of Gandhi going to Chiang Kai-shek was contrary to Chinese usage, first because he was in position of a host and secondly, he was the older man. "We would not think of asking you to come to the Government House," the Generalissimo said. "We would come again after you have had your meal and rest." "But," said Gandhi, "I have had my meal on train in order to give you the whole of my time here, and I would suggest, if it were not inconvenient to you, to stay here, have an Indian meal with us, and we can then talk until the minute of my departure. We can thus save the time of going to and coming back from Barrackpore." And so the guests stayed, and talked with Gandhi until the moment of his departure for the station. The discussion lasted over four hours.

Some part of the time was taken up by Gandhi in explaining the genesis and course of satyagraha and non-co-operation, and also in demonstrating to the Generalissimo and the Madame the action of his "weapon of war", a weapon which, as he explained, "makes no noise, which does not kill, but which, if anything, gives life." The Madame watched the working of the *dhanush takli* and said: "You will have to teach me this." He said: "Come to Sevagram, and I shall teach it to you. Let the Generalissimo leave you here as his ambassador, and I adopt you as my daughter." For half an hour, the official interpreter who accompanied the Generalissimo interpreted him. Then, said Gandhi: "But surely ours is not formal official talk. Why should not the Madame interpret you?" "Now, now, Mahatmaji, that is devastating," she said. "Now I know how everyone succumbs to you. My husband is most taxing. Whenever there is something very difficult to interpret, delicate nuances of

his thought to be conveyed, I must interpret him. But for one year I have been having an easy time asking the official interpreter to do it for me." "That means you are a faithless wife," said Gandhi laughing. "Surely," she said, "he did not marry an interpreter, he married a woman." Then the serious discussions started.

The Generalissimo was sure that non-co-operation was good for India but he was not sure that it would serve equally well for other countries, unless, of course, they were like India in their circumstances and environments. He was full of indignation at what Japan had done and was doing in China, and had grave fears of India having to go through China's terrible fate, if the Japanese overran India. "Your civil resistance," he said, "is not mere passivity, I am sure. But these foes may not listen to active civil resistance, and may make even the preaching of non-violence impossible."

"All I can say," said Gandhi, "is that God gives me the guidance to react to situations as they arise. Though, therefore, I cannot say how exactly I will react in case of an invasion, I know that God will give me proper guidance. But this talk cannot, I know, satisfy you. I would invite you to come to Sevagram where we can discuss the subject quietly for days. I know, of course, that it is an impossible request, for you cannot possibly stay."

"Who knows," said the Madame, "we may be back here sooner than later. After all Calcutta is only twelve hours from Chungking".

"Then you will pay me a monthly visit," said Gandhi as he bade good-bye to the distinguished visitors.

The interview over, Gandhi left for Wardha. On the train, he wrote on "Criminal Assaults":

"The whole world is on trial today. No one can escape from the war. Whilst the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the products of poets' imagination, their authors were not mere rhymesters. They were seers. What they depicted is happening before our very eyes today. Ravanas are warring with each other. They are showing matchless strength. They throw their deadly weapons from the air. No deed of bravery in the battlefield is beyond their capacity or imagination.

"Man would not fight in this manner, certainly not the gods. Only brutes can. Soldiers drunk with the pride of physical strength loot shops and are not even ashamed to take liberties with women. The administration is powerless in the war time to prevent such

happenings. The army fulfils their primary need, and they wink the eye at their misdeeds. Where a whole nation is militarized, the way of military life becomes part and parcel of its civilization. Therefore, a soldier's taking such liberties is not a matter for condemnation. But it would take generations for India to become so.

"Hence arise questions which a sister sends me: '(1) If a soldier commits an assault on a woman, can she be said to have lost her virtue? (2) Is such a woman to be condemned and ostracized by society? (3) What should the women and the public do under such circumstances?'

"Whilst the woman has in point of fact lost her virtue, the loss cannot in any way render her liable to be condemned or treated as an outcast. She is entitled to our sympathy for she has been cruelly injured, and we should tend her wounds as we would those of any injured person.

"A woman is worthy of condemnation, only when she is a willing party to her dishonour. In no case, are adultery and criminal assault synonymous terms. If we were to view the matter in this light, we would not hide such instances, as has thus far been our wont. Public opinion against such conduct on the part of men towards women would then be created and freely exercised.

"If the press carried on a sustained agitation, soldiers, white or brown, would be compelled to prevent such misbehaviour.

"My advice to women is that they should leave the cities and migrate to the villages, where a wide field of service awaits them. There is comparatively little risk of their being assaulted in villages. They must, however, live simple lives and make themselves one with the poor. If they will display their wealth by dressing in silks and satins and wearing jewellery, they will, in running away from one danger, expose themselves to a double. Naturally, the advice cannot refer to those whom duty compels to live in cities.

"The main thing, however, is for women to know how to be fearless. It is my firm conviction that a fearless woman who knows that her purity is her best shield can never be dishonoured. However beastly the man, he will bow in shame before the flame of her dazzling purity. There are examples even in modern times of women who have thus defended themselves. I can, as I write, recall two such instances. I, therefore, recommend women who read this article to try to cultivate this courage. They will become wholly

fearless, if they can and cease to tremble as they do today at the mere thought of assaults. It is not, however, necessary for a woman to go through a bitter experience for the sake of passing a test of courage. These experiences mercifully do not come in the way of lakhs or even thousands. Every soldier is not a beast. It is a minority that loses all sense of decency. Only twenty per cent of snakes are poisonous, and out of these a few only bite. They do not attack unless trodden on. But this knowledge does not help those who are full of fear and tremble at the sight of a snake. Parents and husbands should, therefore, instruct women in the art of becoming fearless. It can best be learnt from a living faith in God. Though He is invisible, He is one's unfailing protector. He who has this faith is the most fearless of all.

"But such faith or courage can't be acquired in a day. Meantime we must try to explore other means. When a woman is assaulted, she may not stop to think in terms of *himsa* or ahimsa. Her primary duty is self-protection. She is at liberty to employ every method or means that come to her mind, in order to defend her honour. God has given her nails and teeth. She must use them with all her strength and, if need be, die in the effort. The man or woman who has shed all fear of death will be able not only to protect himself or herself but others also through laying down his or her life. In truth, we fear death most, and hence we ultimately submit to superior physical force. Some will bend the knee to the invader, some will resort to bribery, some will crawl on their bellies or submit to other forms of humiliation, and some women will even give their bodies rather than die. I have not written this in a carping spirit. I am only illustrating human nature. Whether we crawl on our bellies, or whether a woman yields to the lust of man, is symbolic of that same love of life which makes us stoop to anything. Therefore, only he who loses his life shall save it. To enjoy life one should give up the lure of life. That should be part of our nature.

"So much for what a woman should do. But what about a man who is witness to such crimes? The answer is implied in the foregoing. He must not be a passive onlooker. Man must protect the woman. He must not run for police help; he must not rest satisfied by pulling the alarm chain in the train. If he is able to practice non-violence, he will die in doing so and save the woman in jeopardy. If he does not believe in non-violence or can't practise it, he

must try to save her by using all the force he may have. In either way, there must be readiness on his part to lay down his life.

"If old, decrepit and toothless, as I am, I were to plead non-violence and be a helpless witness of assault on the honour of a sister, my so-called mahatmaship would be ridiculed, dishonoured and lost. If I or those like me were to intervene and lay down our lives whether violently or non-violently, we would surely save the prey and at any rate we would not remain living witnesses to her dishonour.

"So much about the witnesses. But if the courageous spirit pervades the entire atmosphere of our country, and it is known that no Indian will stand women being assaulted, I venture to say that no soldier will dare to touch them. That such a spirit does not exist is a matter of shame for us. But it will be something, if persons ready to wipe out this blot are forthcoming.

"Those who have influence with the Government will try to get the authorities to take the necessary action. But self-help is best help. In the present circumstances we may rely on our own strength and God's help."

On March 7, Rangoon fell. Japan was knocking at the gates of India. Gandhi started giving instructions through *Harijan*:

"No one is obliged to stay in against his will. In the event of bombardment, it is clear that non-combatants can only be a burden in every way. Successful defence against a powerful enemy requires exclusive concentration on holding the enemy at bay. The defendants' attention must not be divided. This is from the military point of view.

"But we have war resisters too, either humanitarian or political. They may not stay unless their object is merely to cause embarrassment for the sake of it. I hope there are none such. They should, therefore, be out of the cities. Then there are those who don't know what to do in the event of bombardment. They should all evacuate. As the reader will see, my opinion has little to do with my war resistance. For in this case, and up to a point, military necessity and duty of war resisters demand the same action.

"If I could convert any city or all cities wholly, including the combatants of yesterday, I should welcome the invading host and try to convert even them or challenge them to do their worst, without offering retaliation. But no such good luck awaits me. If cities

were converted, all India, including the rulers, would be converted and there would be peace in India and peace in the world. But that must remain a day-dream yet awhile. Only I won't be moved from my position by being told that the Jap or the Nazi is not the same man as the English. I draw no such fundamental distinction between man and man. But I must not detain the reader on the speculative side of the matter-of-fact question that faces us.

"Assuming then that all who should or a part of them have evacuated the cities and have gone to the villages or are about to go, what should they do? They must go with the village mind to live the village life, as much as possible. They may not reproduce city conditions and build temporary palaces. They should go to the villages in a spirit of service, study their economic and other conditions, and ameliorate them not by giving alms but by giving the villagers work of a permanent nature. In other words, they should work the constructive programme among the villagers. Thus they will identify themselves with the villagers and become a kind of co-operative society with an ordered programme of economic, social, hygienic and political reconstruction.

"The greatest problem the new-comers will have to tackle will be to deal with loot and dacoities. It will tax their resources to the utmost. The non-violent way is there. If that is not clear to them, with the co-operation of the villagers, they should organize themselves for armed defence against robbers and dacoits. We have too long looked to the Government to do this elementary work for us, not excluding even the reclamation of castes called the criminal tribes. The Government cannot do much, if anything at all, at this critical time. The work has perforce to be done by the evacuees violently, non-violently, or both ways."

"You have advised evacuation from the cities of those who are not wanted for service or other reasons. But what are those poor people to do, who have no homes to go to and who would be unwelcome wherever they go?" asked a correspondent.

"They must be provided for by the people of the provinces to which they belong," answered Gandhi. "If we are one nation, we should have no difficulty in providing for every contingency that may arise. If we are to establish a new order of society, we can act from now. I can only speak from the non-violent angle and no other. If the national mind is working in that direction, consciously

or unconsciously individuals and institutions will, without fuss, be absorbing all such persons as you mention. No able-bodied person should be put on charity; he should be given work enough to feed him properly. This shifting of the population, if it is wisely done, must result in a silent reorganization of villages."

"Do you imagine the villages to be safe?" inquired another correspondent.

Gandhi replied: "I have not suggested migration to the villages for the soft life they will provide. Fright was no ingredient of my plan. It was and still is good even from a military point of view, as has now been made abundantly clear. All the danger you present is undoubtedly bound up with migration to the villages. But that to my mind is an additional reason for it. Who will put heart into the villagers and dispel panic, if it is not the right type of experienced city people? They will cover not only the aged and the infirm who may migrate to the villages, but they will also help and serve the villagers in the many ways I have pointed out in these columns. Courage is indispensable in these times for every true act."

The next question was: "In view of the situation that may arise at any moment in India, would you give an outline or skeleton of a village swaraj committee, which could function in all village matters in the absence of, and without relying upon, an overhead Government or other organization?" To this Gandhi replied:

"My idea of village swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it will grow useful money crops, thus excluding *ganja*, tobacco, opium and the like. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own waterworks ensuring a clean water supply. This can be done through controlled wells or tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible, every activity will be conducted on co-operative basis. There will be no caste, such as we have today with their graded untouchability. Non-violence with its technique of satyagraha and non-co-operation will be the sanction of the village community. There will be a compulsory service of village guards who will be

selected by rotation from the register maintained by the village. The government of the village will be conducted by the panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishments in the accepted sense, this panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. Any village can become such a republic without much interference, even from the present Government whose sole effective connection with the villages is the exaction of village revenue. I have not examined here the question of relations with the neighbouring villages and the centre, if any. My purpose is to present an outline of village government. Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and the government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world. For the law governing every villager is that he will suffer death in the defence of his and his village's honour.

"The reader may well ask me, as I am asking myself while penning these lines, as to why I have not been able to model Sevagram after the picture here drawn. My answer is that I am making the attempt. I can see the dim traces of success, though I can show nothing visible. But there is nothing inherently impossible in the picture drawn here. To model such a village may be the work of a lifetime. Any lover of true democracy and village life can take up a village, treat it as his world and his sole work, and he will find excellent results. He begins by being the village scavenger, spinner, watchman, medicine man and schoolmaster all at once. If nobody comes near him, he will be satisfied with scavenging and spinning."

On March 16, Gandhi commented on "Scorched Earth":

"The Russian technique of scorched earth has staggered humanity, but humanity has been powerless to do anything except applaud the amazing sacrifice and bravery that counted no cost too great to circumvent the enemy. I have shared the amazement with the admirers but not their admiration.

"We like to imitate what we admire. And now that this prospect faces us, are we able to contemplate with equanimity, or feel the glow of bravery and sacrifice at the prospect of India's earth

being scorched and everything destroyed, in order that enemy's march may be hampered?

"As a war resister, my answer can only be one. I see neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying life or property for offence or defence. I would far rather leave, if I must, my crops and homestead for the enemy to use than destroy them for the sake of preventing their use by him. There is reason, sacrifice and even bravery in so leaving my homestead and crops, if I do so not out of fear but because I refuse to regard anyone as my enemy, that is, out of a humanitarian motive.

"But in India's case there is, too, a practical consideration. Unlike Russia's, India's masses have no national instinct developed in the sense that Russia's have. India is not fighting. Her conquerors are. Supposing that the conquerors are worsted and the Japanese come, inarticulate masses of India will not even notice the change for the time being or for a long time. The intelligentsia are divided on the issue of the war. The motive here is irrelevant. India's soldiers are in no sense a national army. They are soldiers because it is their profession. They will as soon fight under the Japanese or any other, provided they are paid for fighting. In these circumstances, therefore, the policy of scorched earth would be a wholly indefensible act.

"It is, therefore, a matter for satisfaction that Indian opinion is being expressed against the policy of scorching. I know nothing of the requirements of the military, but they can never be allowed to supersede the national or humanitarian considerations which the nation may have accepted. The military must thus be an arm of the dominant civil power, not its substitute. The Government of India will considerably ease the situation and allay the anxiety by declaring in unequivocal terms that they will not apply, if the occasion ever arise, the scorched earth policy to India, especial regard being had to her peculiar position."

"I am of the view," retorted a correspondent, "that there is great bravery and sacrifice in the scorched earth policy which they are adopting to resist the invader. I cannot, therefore, understand your saying that there is neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying property for defence. Secondly, although you ask people to resist the invader, you would prefer them to leave their crops and homestead for the invader to use, not out of fear but for a humanitarian

motive. I cannot understand how this can be reconciled with your teaching of resistance to evil." To this, Gandhi replied:

"Surely the meaning is plain. There is no bravery in my poisoning my well or filling it in, so that my brother who is at war with me may not use the water. Let us assume that I am fighting him in the orthodox manner. Nor is there sacrifice in it, for it does not purify me, and sacrifice, as its root meaning implies, presupposes purity. Such destruction may be likened to cutting one's nose to spite one's face. Warriors of old had wholesome laws of war. Among the excluded things were poisoning wells and destroying food crops. But I do claim that there are bravery and sacrifice in my leaving my wells, crops and homestead intact, bravery in that the sentiment of leaving something for the enemy purifies and ennobles me.

"My questioner has missed the conditional expression 'if I must'. I have imagined a state of things in which I am not prepared just now to die and, therefore, I want to retreat in an orderly manner in the hope of resisting under other and better auspices. The thing to consider here is not resistance but non-destruction of the food crops and the like. Resistance, violent or non-violent, has to be well thought out. Thoughtless resistance will be regarded as bravado in the military parlance and violence or folly in the language of non-violence. Retreat itself is often a plan of resistance and may be a precursor of great bravery and sacrifice. Every retreat is not cowardice which implies fear to die. Of course, a brave man would more often die in violently or non-violently resisting the aggressor in the latter's attempt to oust him from his property, but he will be no less brave if wisdom dictates present retreat."

Under "Non-violent Resistance", Gandhi wrote:

"Japan is knocking at our gates. What are we to do in a non-violent way? If we were a free country, things could be done non-violently to prevent the Japanese from entering the country. As it is, non-violent resistance could commence the moment they effected a landing. Thus, non-violent resisters would refuse them any help, even water. For it is no part of their duty to help anyone to steal their country. But if a Japanese had missed his way and was dying of thirst and sought help as a human being, a non-violent resister, who may not regard anyone as his enemy, would give water to the thirsty one. Suppose the Japanese compel resisters to give water, the resisters must die in the act of resistance. It is conceivable

that they will exterminate all resisters. The underlying belief in such non-violent resistance is that the aggressor will, in time, be mentally and even physically tired of killing non-violent resisters. He will begin to search what this new (for him) force is which refuses co-operation without seeking to hurt, and will probably desist from further slaughter. But the resisters may find that the Japanese are utterly heartless and that they do not care how many they kill. The non-violent resisters will have won the day, inasmuch as they will have preferred extermination to submission.

"But things will not happen quite so simply as I have put them. There are at least four parties in the country. First, the British and the army they have brought into being. The Japanese declare that they have no designs upon India. Their quarrel is only with the British. In this they are assisted by some Indians who are in Japan. It is difficult to guess how many, but there must be a fairly large number who believe in the declaration of the Japanese and think that they will deliver the country from the British yoke and retire. Even if the worst happens, their fatigue of the British yoke is so great that they would even welcome the Japanese yoke for a change. This is the second party. The third are the neutrals, who though not non-violent, will help neither the British nor the Japanese.

"The fourth and last are non-violent resisters. If they are only a few, their resistance will be ineffective except as an example for the future. Such resisters will calmly die wherever they are, but will not bend the knee before the aggressor. They will not be deceived by promises. They do not seek deliverance from the British yoke through the help of a third party. They believe implicitly in their own way of fighting and no other. Their fight is on behalf of the dumb millions who do not perhaps know that there is such a thing as deliverance. They have neither hatred for the British nor love for the Japanese. They wish well to both, as to all others. They would like both to do what is right. They believe that non-violence alone will lead men to do right under all circumstances. Therefore, if for want of enough companions non-violent resisters cannot reach the goal, they will not give up their way but pursue it to death.

"The task before the votaries of non-violence is very difficult. But no difficulty can baffle men who have faith in their mission.

"This is going to be a long-drawn-out agony. Let the non-violent resisters not make impossible attempts. Their powers are limited.

A resister in Kerala is not physically responsible for the defence of Assam which is just now in imminent danger. If Assam is non-violently inclined, it is well able to take care of itself. If it is not, no party of non-violent resisters from Kerala can help it or any other province. Kerala can help Assam, etc., by demonstrating its non-violence in Kerala itself. The Japanese army, if it gets a foot-hold in India, will not stop at Assam. In order to defeat the British, it has to overrun the whole country. The British will fight every inch of ground. Loss of India will probably be admission of complete defeat for them. But whether it is so or not, it is quite clear that Japan will not rest till India is wholly in her hands. Hence, non-violent resisters must remain at their posts wherever they are.

"One thing has to be made quite clear. Where the British army is actually engaging the 'enemy', it would be perhaps improper for direct resistance to function. It will not be non-violent resistance when it is mixed with, or allies itself to, violence.

"Let me, therefore, reiterate what I have said so often. The best preparation for, and even the expression of, non-violence lies in the determined pursuit of the constructive programme. Anyone who believes that without the backing of constructive programme he will show non-violent strength when the testing time comes will fail miserably. It will be, like the attempt of a starving unarmed man, to match his physical strength against a fully fed and panoplied soldier, foredoomed to failure. He who has no belief in the constructive programme has, in my opinion, no concrete feeling for the starved millions. He who is devoid of that feeling can't fight non-violently. In actual practice, the expansion of my non-violence has kept exact pace with that of my identification with the starved humanity. I am still far from the non-violence of my conception, for am I not still far away from the identification of my conception with the dumb humanity."

Cripps Mission

1942

THE SPREAD of war to the Pacific and the Japanese occupation of South-East Asia had brought India into the front line of battle. She now became the keystone of allied defence in the Indian Ocean, the principal route for supplies from Britain and the United States to China, and an important source of man-power and war materials for allied forces in the Near and Far East. When Rangoon fell on March 7, 1942, it seemed as if the tide of Japanese conquest would soon be sweeping into Bengal and Madras. On March 11, Churchill announced that the War Cabinet had agreed on a plan for India, and that Sir Stafford Cripps had consented to go to India to ascertain whether this plan would secure a "reasonable and practical" measure of acceptance and "thus promote the concentration of all Indian thought and energies" on defence against Japan.

Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in Delhi on March 22. After meeting Lord Linlithgow and the members of the Central Government and other high officials, Sir Stafford began a series of private conversations with the leaders of all the political parties. The proposals embodied in a draft declaration as explained by him to the press were in effect as follows:

1. In order to achieve "the earliest possible realization of self-government in India", the British Government propose that steps should be taken to create a new Indian Union which will have the full status of a dominion with the power to secede, if it so chooses, from the British Commonwealth.

2. "Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities" a constitution-making body shall be set up, representing both British India and the states, and the British Government undertakes to accept and implement the constitution framed by that body on two conditions: (*a*) Any province or provinces which do not acquiesce in the new constitution will be entitled to frame a constitution of their own,

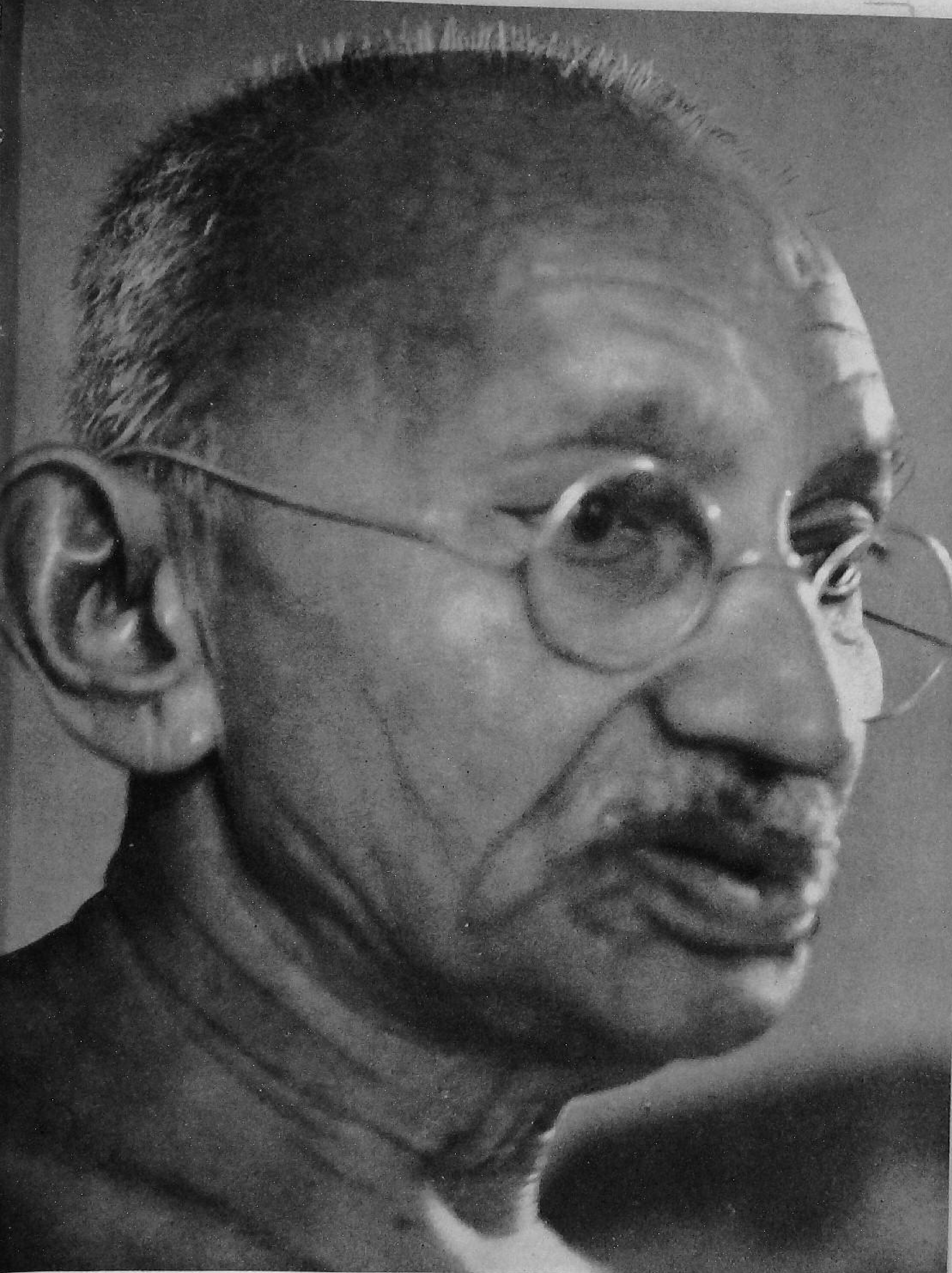
giving them "the same full status as the Indian Union"; and any Indian state or states shall be similarly free to adhere to the new constitution or not. (*b*) A treaty shall be negotiated between the British Government and the constitution-making body to cover "all matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands".

3. In the meantime, the British Government must retain control of the defence of India "as part of their world war effort", but the task of organizing the military, moral and material resources of India rests with the Government of India in co-operation with the peoples, and to that end they invite the immediate participation of their leaders "in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations".

The proposals dealt essentially with the future, after the cessation of hostilities, though there was a final clause which vaguely invited co-operation in the present. The negotiations began on March 25 and ended on April 10. In the course of these seventeen days, Sir Stafford interviewed Gandhi, who explained that he represented only himself and not the Congress, and the leaders of all the major parties. Sir Stafford's discussions with the Congress were carried on mainly through Azad and Nehru, but he saw many other members of the Working Committee which was sitting at Delhi throughout the negotiations. Jinnah came alone for the Muslim League. The Hindu Mahasabha was represented by Savarkar and four other delegates, the Depressed Classes by Dr. Ambedkar and M. C. Rajah, and the Liberals by Sapru and Jayakar. All other parties and communal interests had their say.

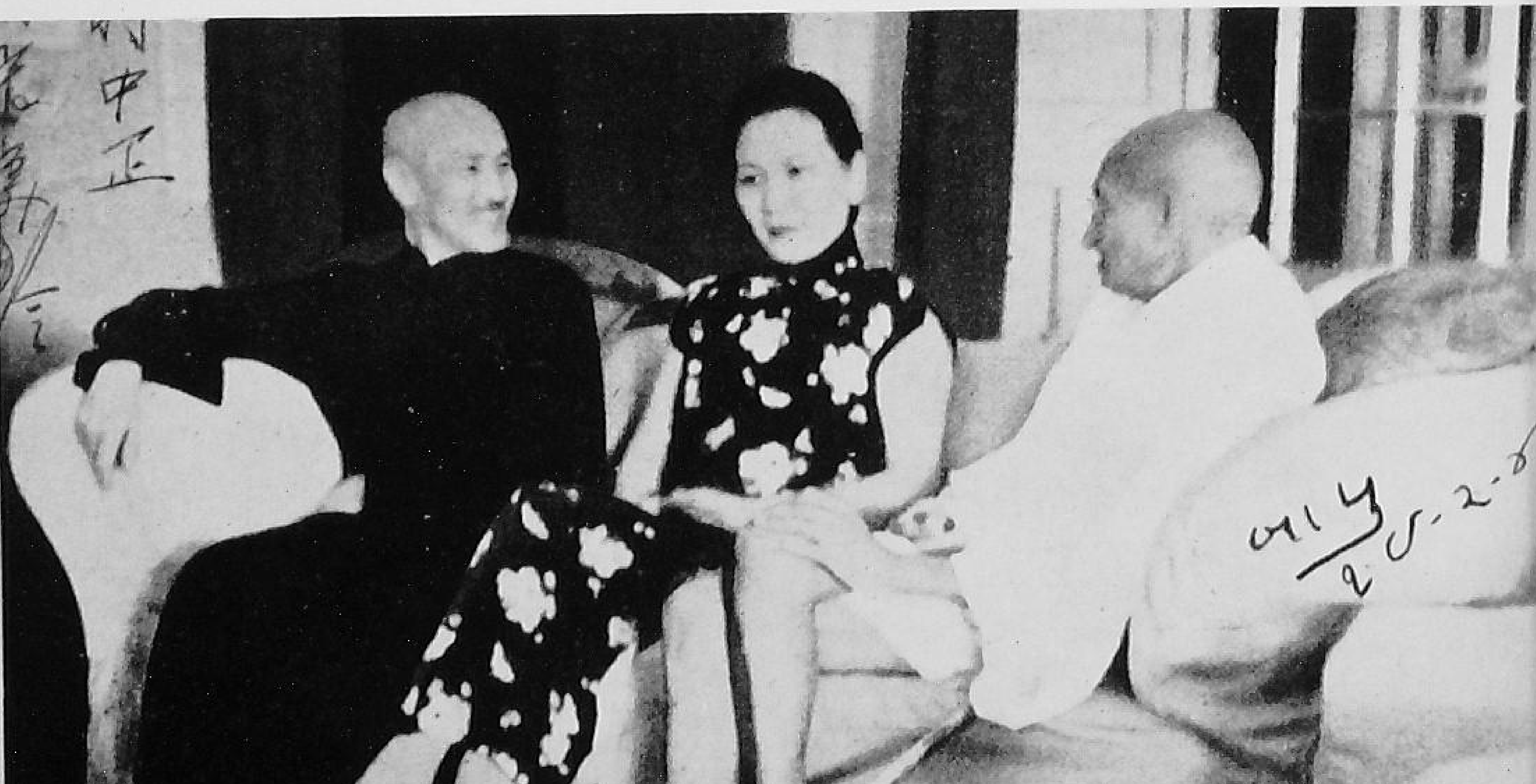
The attitude of the Muslim League to the proposed constitution-making scheme was hostile. The Muslims, said the League resolution, demanded a definite pronouncement in favour of Pakistan. The right of non-accession, moreover, was vitiated by the maintenance of the existing provinces with their illogical frontiers. Nor in any case the Muslims could participate in a constitution-making body which was not elected by separate electorates and in which decisions were to be taken by a bare majority.

The Working Committee of the Mahasabha declared itself more or less satisfied with parts of the British scheme. But the scheme as a whole was rejected mainly because of the non-adherence provisions. "India is one and indivisible." The memorandum submitted



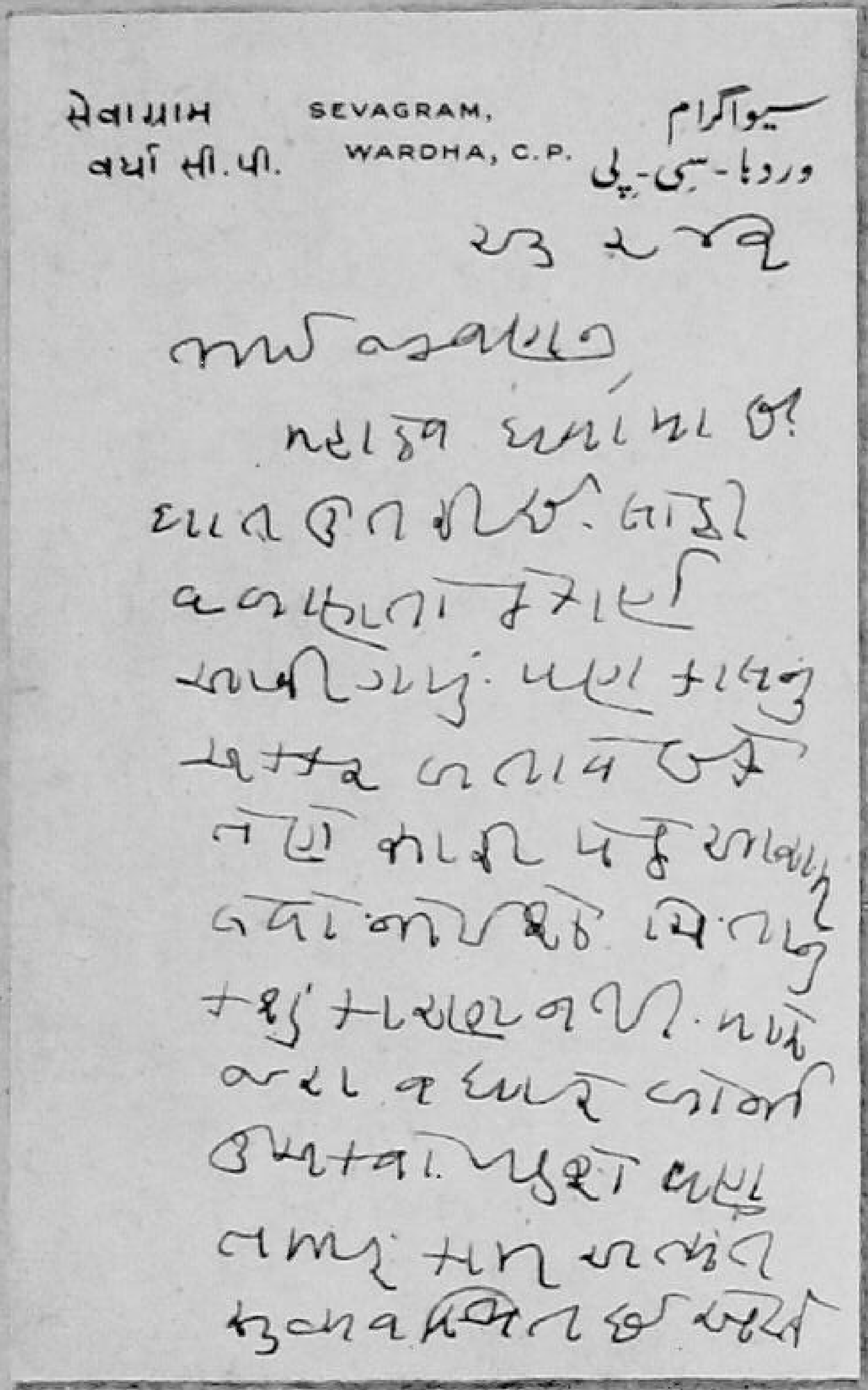
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

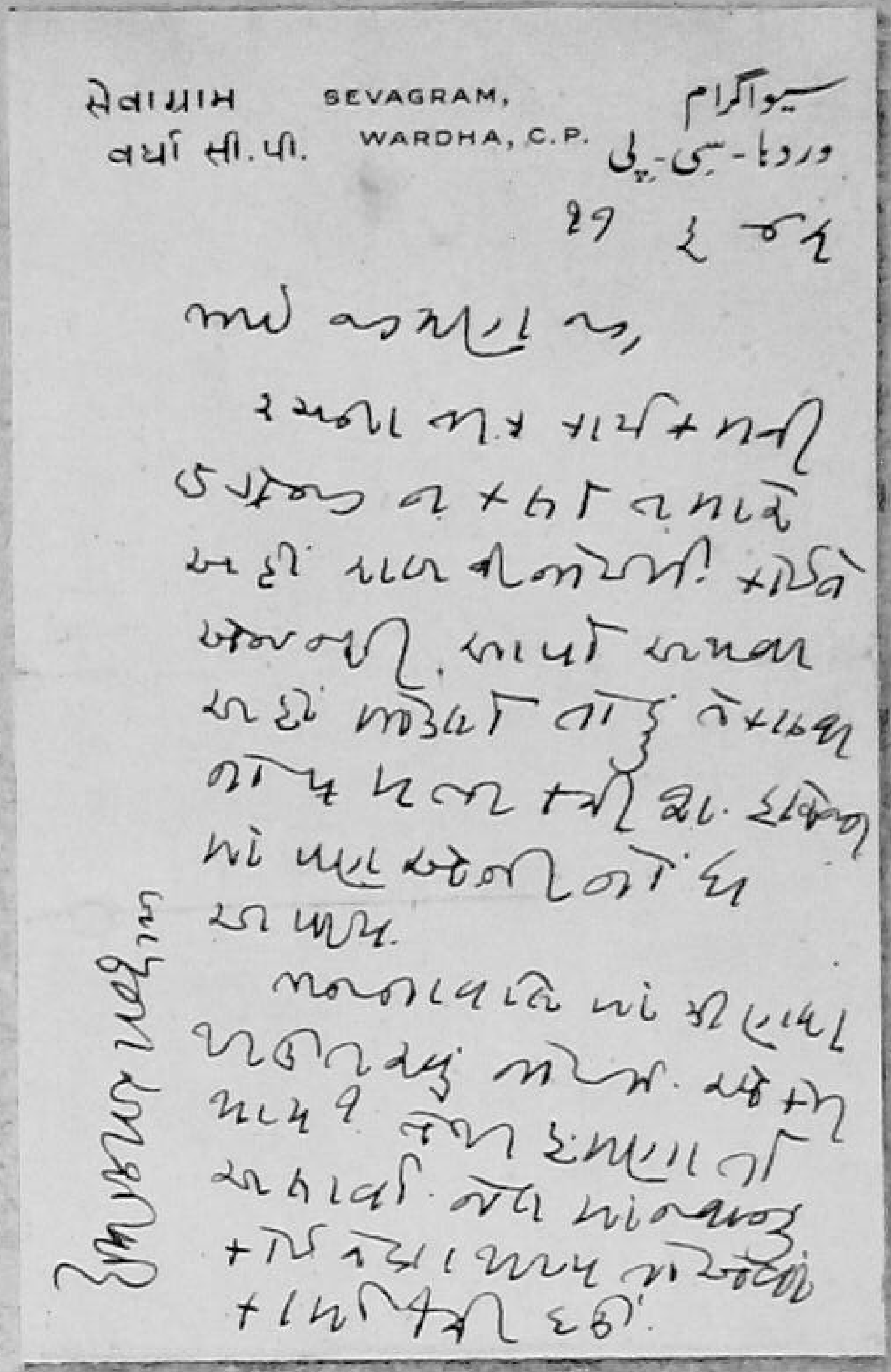
Gandhi aged 73



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

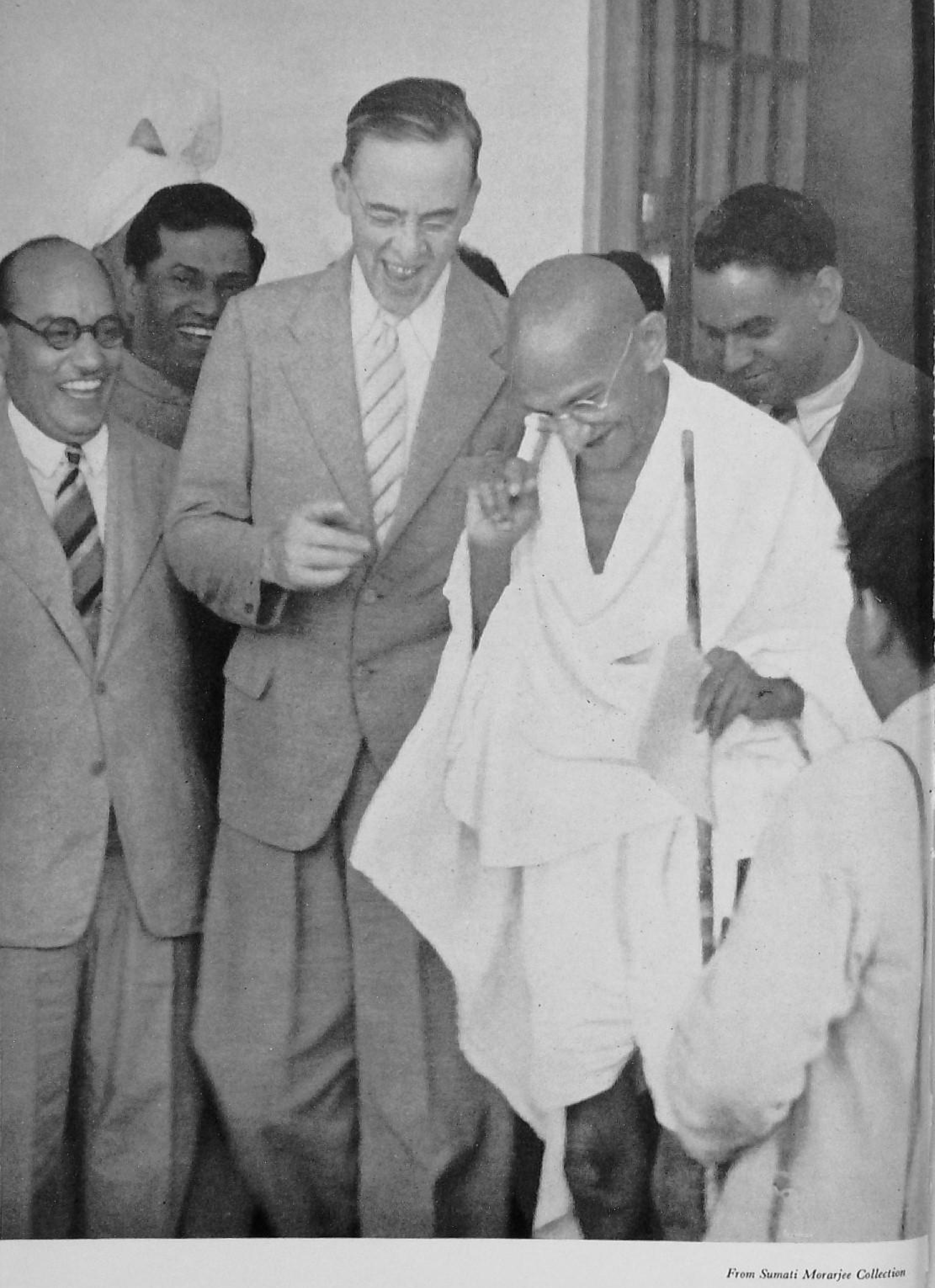
Gandhi with Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek at Birla House, Calcutta, February 18, 1942





Courtesy : Jivanji D. Desai

Gandhi's letters to the Navajivan Press manager regarding the Navajivan publications, dated Sevagram, February 23 and March 17, 1942



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

With Sir Stafford Cripps at Delhi, March 27, 1942

by Sapru and Jayakar was less intransigent. "The creation of more than one union," they said, "howsoever consistent in theory with the principle of self-determination, will be disastrous to the lasting interests of the country and its integrity and security." A fierce protest against the non-adherence provisions came from the Sikhs. "We shall resist by all possible means separation of the Punjab from the all-India Union." The firmest stand was taken by the representatives of the Depressed Classes who denounced the scheme for its failure to provide the necessary safeguards for them.

"Why did you come if this is what you have to offer?" Gandhi said to Sir Stafford. "I would advise you to take the first plane home." He described the declaration as "a post-dated cheque". He left Delhi for Sevagram on April 2, bidding the Congress Working Committee to make up its own mind. In an interview to Eve Curie, Gandhi remarked: "Sir Stafford is a very good man but he has entered bad machinery, British imperialism. He hopes to improve that machinery, but in the end it will be the machinery that will get the better of him."

The Working Committee admitted that "self-determination for the people of India is accepted in principle" but it was only to take effect in the "uncertain future". The Working Committee resolution said: "Only the realization of present freedom could light the flame which would illuminate millions of hearts and move them to action." Moreover, though "the future independence may be implicit in the proposals . . . the accompanying proposals and the restrictions are such that real freedom may well become an illusion." The Congress rejected the Cripps scheme for two reasons. First, it ignored "the ninety millions of people in the Indian states" who were to have no voice in shaping the constitution. States might become "the barriers to the growth of Indian freedom". Secondly, "the novel principle of non-accession" was "a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity". "The Congress Working Committee cannot think in terms of compelling people of any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will", but compulsion must not be used against "other substantial groups within that area."

Till the very last day, the discussions were confined to the final paragraph of the draft declaration, the paragraph which dealt with the defence and invited the co-operation of the Indian people and

parties. The war was the dominant issue and the invasion of India seemed imminent. The Congress claimed that, in order to rally the Indian public to a maximum effort of patriotism, there must be an Indian Defence Minister. This was conceded on the British side, but it was held that the Commander-in-Chief could not transfer his major duties to a civilian colleague in the middle of the war. Col. Johnson, the special representative to President Roosevelt, arrived on the scene to iron out differences. Formulas apportioning responsibility were interchanged. The Congress insisted that a convention should be observed that the Viceroy was to treat his new council as a cabinet and accept its decisions. Sir Stafford rejected it and on April 12 he left Delhi for London in a huff. He said that his offer to India had been withdrawn.

It was stated by many critics that the rejection by the Congress was due to the uncompromising attitude of Gandhi. Azad, in an interview, said: "The Mahatma's views as regards the participation in any war are well known and it will be entirely untrue to suggest that the Working Committee's decisions have in any way been influenced by these views. In fact, Mahatma Gandhi made it clear to the Working Committee members that they were perfectly free to come to their own decisions on the merits of the proposals." He revealed that the Cripps negotiations broke down on the question of defence alone.

On April 13, Gandhi commented at length from Sevagram on "That Ill-fated Proposal":

"It is a thousand pities that the British Government should have sent a proposal for dissolving the political deadlock, which, on the face of it, was too ridiculous to find acceptance anywhere. And it was a misfortune that the bearer should have been Sir Stafford Cripps, acclaimed as a radical among the radicals and a friend of India. I have no doubt about his goodwill. He believed that no one could have brought anything better for India. But he should have known that at least the Congress would not look at dominion status even though it carried the right of secession the very moment it was taken. He knew too that the proposal contemplated the splitting up of India into three parts, each having different ideas of governance. It contemplated Pakistan, and yet not the Pakistan of the Muslim League's conception. And last of all, it gave no real control over defence to responsible ministers.

"The fact is that Sir Stafford Cripps, having become part of the imperial machinery, unconsciously partook of its quality. Such is its strength. It is the almost invariable experience in India that those Indians who are drawn into it lose their originality and become like their companions in the service and often outdo the latter in their loyalty to the Moloch of imperialism.

"Had Sir Stafford remained detached, he would have conferred with his radical friends in India and secured their approbation before undertaking his very difficult mission. If it be said in answer that he could not very well do so, that is exactly what I mean when I say that, having become part of the machinery, he was bound to fall under its spell and could not do the obvious thing.

"But it is no use brooding over the past or British mistakes. It is more profitable to look within. The British will take care of themselves, if we will take care of ourselves. Our mistakes or rather our defects are many. Why blame the British for our own limitations? Attainment of independence is an impossibility, till we have solved the communal tangle. We may not blind ourselves to the naked fact. How to tackle the problem is another question. We will never tackle it, so long as either or both parties think that independence will or can come without any solution of the tangle. There are two ways of solving what has almost become insoluble. The one is the royal way of non-violence, and the other of violence. In the first way, the formal consent or co-operation of the other party is unnecessary. If there is a dispute between two boys over the ownership of an apple, the non-violent way is to leave the apple for the other party to take, the latter well knowing that it would mean non-co-operation on the surrendering party's part. The second way is the usual way of violence. There the parties fight with each other till one is for the time being worsted. All interested in freedom have to make the choice. I suppose that the choice has already been made by the chief actors. But the rank and file do not know their own minds. It is necessary for them, if they can, to think independently and take to non-violent action in terms of unity. It consists in the Hindus and Muslims on the wayside fraternizing with one another, if they believe that joint life is a perfect possibility, nay a necessity. Whether those who believe in the two-nation theory and communal partition of India can live as friends co-operating with one another I do not know. If the vast majority of Muslims

regard themselves as a separate nation having nothing in common with the Hindus and others, no power on earth can compel them to think otherwise. And if they want to partition India on that basis, they must have the partition, unless Hindus want to fight against such a division. So far as I can see, such a preparation is silently going on on behalf of both parties. That way lies suicide. Each party will probably want British or foreign aid. In that case, good-bye to independence. The fight will then range round not independence but the imaginary apple after the manner of the imaginary boys. I dare not contemplate the actuality. I should not like to be its living witness. I would love to see a joint fight for independence. In the very process of securing independence, it is highly likely that we shall have forgotten our quarrels. But if we have not, it will be then only time to quarrel, if we must."

When the Cripps mission was announced, Mr. Horace Alexander and Miss Agatha Harrison had sent Gandhi a cable reminding him of the phrase that Gandhi himself had used, namely, "Andrews legacy". This meant that in memory of Andrews the best Englishmen and best Indians should come together to bring about a permanent understanding between Great Britain and India. In reply, Gandhi wrote a long letter soon after the failure of the Cripps mission—a letter in which he gave expression for the first time to the demand for the British withdrawal. He had not discussed it with any one. "Sir Stafford," Gandhi observed in that letter, "has come and gone. How nice it would have been if he had not come with that dismal mission. I talked to him frankly as a friend, if for nothing else for Andrews's sake. I told him that I was speaking to him with Andrews's spirit as my witness. I made suggestions, but all to no avail. As usual, they were not practical. I had not wanted to go. I had nothing to say being 'anti-all-wars'. I went because he was anxious to see me. All this I mention, in order to give the background. I was not present throughout the negotiations with the Working Committee. I came away. You know the result. It was inevitable. The whole thing has left a bad taste in the mouth." The letter concluded thus: "My firm opinion is that the British should leave India now in an orderly manner and not run the risk that they did in Singapore and Malaya and Burma. The act would mean courage of a high order, confessions of human limitations, and right doing by India."

In *Harijan* dated April 26, Gandhi pleaded for the British withdrawal from India:

"Among the multitude of questions contained in my correspondence is the one referring to the advent of foreign soldiers in India. We have foreign prisoners enough. Now we have promise of a never-ending stream of soldiers from America and possibly from China. I must confess that I do not look upon this event with equanimity. Cannot a limitless number of soldiers be trained out of India's millions? Would they not make as good fighting material, as any in the world? Then why foreigners? We know what American aid means. It amounts in the end to American influence, if not American rule added to British. It is a tremendous price to pay for the possible success of allied arms. I see no Indian freedom peeping through all this preparation for the so-called defence of India. It is a preparation pure and simple for the defence of the British Empire, whatever may be asserted to the contrary. If the British left India to her fate as they had to leave Singapore, non-violent India would not lose anything. Probably, the Japanese would leave India alone. Perhaps India, if the main parties composed their differences as they probably would, would be able effectively to help China in the way of peace and in the long run may even play a decisive part in the promotion of world peace. But all these happy things may not happen, if the British will leave India only when they must. How much more creditable, how much braver it would be for Britain to offer battle in the West and leave the East to adjust her own position! There is no guarantee that she will be able to protect, during this war, all her vast possessions. They have become a dead weight round her. If she wisely loosens herself from this weight, and the Nazis, the fascists or the Japanese instead of leaving India alone choose to subjugate her, they will find that they have to hold more than they can in their iron hoop. They will find it much more difficult than Great Britain has. Their very rigidity will strangle them. The British system had an elasticity which served so long as it had no powerful rivals. British elasticity is of no help today. I have said more than once in these columns that the Nazi power had risen as a nemesis to punish Britain for her sins of exploitation and enslavement of the Asiatic and African races.

"Whatever the consequences, therefore, to India, her real safety and that of Britain too lie in orderly and timely British withdrawal

from India. All talk of treaties with the princes and obligations towards minorities are a British creation designed for the preservation of the British rule and the British interests. It must melt before the stern reality that faces all of us. The princes, in so far as they rely upon their armed strength, are more than able to defend themselves against unarmed India. The fiction of majority and minority will vanish like the mist before the morning sun of liberty. Truth to tell, there will be neither majority nor minority in the absence of the paralysing British arms. The millions of India would then be an undefined but one mass of humanity. I have no doubt that at that time the natural leaders will have wisdom enough to evolve an honourable solution of their difficulties. This presupposes Japan and the other powers leaving India alone. If they do not, I should hope even then for wisdom to guide the principal parties to devise a scheme whereby they all can act with one mind to face the new menace.

"Holding the views I do, it is clear why I look upon the introduction of foreign soldiers as a positive danger thoroughly to be deplored and distrusted. The present state of things and the attempt to uphold it are a distinct sign of corroding consumption of the body politic in India."

In the same issue of *Harijan*, through the "Question Box", Gandhi tried to remove the cobwebs from his readers' minds.

Question: "If the Japanese really mean what they say and are willing to help to free India from the British yoke, why should we not willingly accept their help?"

Answer: "It is folly to suppose that the aggressors can ever be benefactors. The Japanese may free India from the British yoke, but only to put in their own instead. I have always maintained that we should not seek any other power's help to free India from the British yoke. That would not be a non-violent approach. We should have to pay a heavy price, if we ever consented to take the foreign aid as against the British. By our non-violent action, we were within an ace of reaching our goal. I cling to my faith in non-violence. I have no enmity against the Japanese, but I can't contemplate with equanimity their designs upon India. Why do they not realize that we as free men have no quarrel with them? Let them leave India alone. And if they are well-intentioned, what has China done to deserve the devastation they have wrought there?"

Question: "You declared the other day that Jawaharlal Nehru was your 'legal heir'. How do you like the idea of your legal heir advocating guerilla warfare against the Japanese? What will happen to your ahimsa when Jawaharlal openly advocates violence and Rajaji wants arms and military training for the whole nation?"

Answer: "As you have put it, the situation does appear awful. But it really is not so awful as it appears to you. In the first instance, 'legal heir' is not my phrase. I had spoken in Hindi. I had said that he was not my 'legal heir' but that he was virtually my heir. That means that he will take my place, when I am gone. He has never accepted my method in its entirety. He has frankly criticized it, and yet he has faithfully carried out the Congress policy largely influenced, when it was not solely directed, by me. But those like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who have followed me without question cannot be called heirs. And everybody admits that Jawaharlal has the drive that no one else has in the same measure. And have I not said also that when I am gone, he will shed the differences he often declares he has with me? I am sorry that he has developed a fancy for the guerilla warfare. But I have no doubt that it will be a nine days' wonder. It will take no effect. It is foreign to the Indian soil. Twenty-two years' incessant preaching and practice of non-violence, however imperfect it has been, could not suddenly be obliterated by the mere wish of Jawaharlal and Rajaji, powerful though their influence is. I am, therefore, not perturbed by the 'apostasy', either of Jawaharlal or Rajaji. They will return to non-violence with renewed zest, strengthened by the failure, of their effort. Neither goes to violence for his belief in it. They do so because they think probably that India must have a course of violence before coming to non-violence. No one can say beyond doubt how events will shape themselves. It may be that their instinct is correct and mine, backed though it is by experience, is not. I know this, however, that my line is cut out for me. Even though I may be alone in my faith, I must follow it unfalteringly, believing that the masses will never take to the violent method. They will either remain inert or will take to non-violent action. The guerilla warfare can take us nowhere. If it is practised on any large scale, it must lead to disastrous consequences. Non-violent non-co-operation is the most effective substitute for every kind of violent warfare. If the whole nation takes to non-violent action, it can be wholly successful.

It could not be quite so against the British, because their roots have gone deep into the soil. The Japanese have not even got a foothold. I hope that the forthcoming A.-I.C.C. will revert to the non-violent method and give the clearest possible instructions about non-violent non-co-operation. To aid the British effort in the violent way without any official connection and after the failure of the recent negotiations appears to me to court national disgrace."

On April 23, Rajagopalachari addressed a small gathering of his old Congress supporters in the Madras legislature, and carried two resolutions for submission to the A.-I.C.C., the first recommending the acceptance of Pakistan in principle as a basis of settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League, and the second proposing the restoration of a responsible government in Madras. The basic reason behind this move was explained by the resolution itself which asserted that "to sacrifice the chances of the formation of a national government for the doubtful advantage of maintaining a controversy over the unity of India is the most unwise policy and that it has become necessary to choose the lesser evil". Those members who passed this resolution were obsessed by the idea of Japanese invasion.

The A.-I.C.C. met at Allahabad from April 29 to May 2. The feeling of resentment over the Madras resolution was so intense that Rajagopalachari found his position in the Working Committee uncomfortable. He declared that he would be failing in his duty if he did not endeavour to get the people to think and act in the direction in which his conviction led and he resigned from the Working Committee. Having thus freed himself he moved the Madras resolution at the A.-I.C.C. meeting. It was rejected by 120 votes to 15. The A.-I.C.C. adopted by a large majority a counter resolution submitted by Jagat Narain Lal. That resolution expressed the opinion "that any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component state or territorial unit to secede from the Indian Union or federation will be detrimental to the best interests of the people of the different states and provinces and the country as a whole and the Congress, therefore, cannot agree to any such proposal".

Gandhi was not present at Allahabad but had sent from Wardha a draft resolution for the consideration of the Working Committee. The core of the main resolution, which was carried almost without any opposition in the A.-I.C.C., was as follows:

"India's participation in the war was a purely British act. If she were free, she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the war, although her sympathies would in any event have been with the victims of aggression. The A.-I.C.C. is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis as well as the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps make it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in partial measure, British control and British authority in India. Not only the interests of India, but also Britain's safety and world peace and freedom, demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Great Britain or other nations. The committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come to India through interference or invasion by any foreign nation, whatever the professions of that nation may be. In case an invasion takes place, it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take place in the form of non-violent non-co-operation as the British Government have prevented the organization of the national defence by the people in any other way. The committee would, therefore, expect the people of India to offer complete non-violent non-co-operation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders. We may not look to him for favours nor fall to his bribes. If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields, we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist them. The success of such a policy of non-co-operation and of non-violent resistance to the invader will largely depend on the intensive working out of the Congress constructive programme, and more especially the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection in all parts of the country."

The A.-I.C.C. adopted another resolution regarding the recent extraordinary happenings in Burma and notably in Rangoon. The resolution said: "The officials whose duty was to protect the lives and interests of the people in their respective areas utterly failed to discharge that responsibility and ran away from their post of duty, sought safety for themselves, leaving the vast majority of the people wholly uncared and unprovided for. Such arrangements for evacuation as were made were meant for the European population and at every step, racial discrimination was in evidence."

Publication of this resolution was banned by the Government. The police raided the A.-I.C.C. office at Allahabad and confiscated the copies of the resolution. In the course of the raid, notes of discussions in the Congress Working Committee meeting were seized, and these revealed that Gandhi had submitted his own draft of the resolution. The draft resolution for the A.-I.C.C., as was finally passed by the committee, was, however, Nehru's handiwork. And though it was a compromise resolution, Gandhi had triumphed and Nehru had surrendered. Up to this point, he had preached violent resistance to the Japanese. Now Nehru had subscribed to "non-co-operation" as the only method of defence against invasion.

From the end of April onwards, Gandhi explained and elaborated his "Quit India" programme in the columns of *Harijan* and in answers to inquiring journalists. There was a new urgency and passion in his speech and writing. Some of his readers were unable to follow him in this line of argument. He received letters asking, "Are you not inviting the Japanese to attack India by asking the British rulers to withdraw?" He replied in *Harijan* of May 3:

"I am not. I feel convinced that the British presence is the incentive for the Japanese attack. If the British wisely decided to withdraw and leave India to manage her own affairs in the best way she could, the Japanese would be bound to reconsider their plans. The very novelty of the British stroke will confound the Japanese, dissolve the subdued hatred against the British, and the atmosphere will be set up for the ending of an unnatural state of things that has dominated and choked Indian life."

"When even the 'enemy' is in dire distress, should he not be given some quarter?" asked an Englishman. "In asking us to withdraw, are you not inviting your own people to bend the knee to Japan, knowing full well that you have not the non-violent strength as a country to resist any foreign aggression or domination?"

"I am convinced," he replied, "that the time has come during the war, not after it, for the British and the Indians to be reconciled to complete separation from each other. That way and that way alone lies the safety of both and, shall I say, the world. I see with the naked eye that the estrangement is growing. Every act of the British Government is being interpreted, and I think rightly, as being in its own interest. There is no such thing as joint common interest. To take the extreme case, a British victory over the Japanese

will not mean a victory for India. But that is not a near event. In the meanwhile, the introduction of foreign soldiers, the admitted inequalities of treatment of the Indian and European evacuees, and the manifestly overbearing behaviour of the troops are adding to the distrust of British intentions and declarations. I feel that they cannot all of a sudden change their traditional nature. The racial superiority is treated not as vice but a virtue. This is true not only in India; it is equally true in Africa, it is true in Burma and in Ceylon. These countries could not be held otherwise than by assertion of race superiority.

"This is a drastic disease, requiring a drastic remedy. I have pointed the remedy—complete and immediate orderly withdrawal of the British from India at least, in reality and properly from all non-European possessions. It will be the bravest and the cleanest act of the British people. It will at once put the allied cause on a completely moral basis and may even lead to a most honourable peace between the warring nations. And the clean end of imperialism is likely to be the end of fascism and of Nazism which are an offshoot of imperialism.

"British distress cannot be relieved by nationalist India's aid in the manner suggested by the writer. India is ill-equipped for the purpose, even if she can be made enthusiastic about it. And what is there to enthuse nationalistic India? Just as a person cannot feel the glow of the sun's heat in its absence, even so India cannot feel the glow of freedom without the actual experience of it. Many of us simply can't contemplate an utterly free India with calmness and equanimity. The first experience is likely to be a shock before the glow comes. That shock is a necessity. India is a mighty nation. No one can tell how she will act and with what effect, when the shock is delivered.

"I feel, therefore, that I must devote the whole of my energy to the realization of the supreme act. The writer of the letter admits the wrong done to India by the British. I suggest to the writer that the first condition of British success is the present undoing of the wrong. It should precede, not follow victory. The presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India. Their withdrawal removes the bait. Assume, however, that it does not; free India will be better able to cope with the invasion. Unadulterated non-co-operation will then have full sway."

Gandhi arrived in Bombay on May 10, and within one week, he collected five lakhs of rupees for the Deenbandhu Memorial. This was one of his many acts to show his sincere gratefulness to individual Englishmen. "Andrews's friendship was enough to tie me to the British people," he said. "But both he and I were fixed in our determination that the British rule in India in any shape or form must end. Hitherto the rulers have said, 'We would gladly retire, if we know to whom we should hand over the reins.' My answer now is: 'Leave India to God. If that is too much, then leave her to anarchy.' "

On May 11, Gandhi wrote an appeal "To Every Briton":

"When I had just begun my public career in South Africa, I wrote 'An Open Letter to Every Briton in South Africa'. It had its effect. I feel that I should repeat the example at this critical juncture in the history of the world. This time my appeal must be to every Briton in the world. He may be nobody in the counsels of his nation. But in the empire of non-violence, every true thought counts, and every true voice has its full value. *Vox populi vox dei* is not a copy-book maxim. It is an expression of the solid experience of mankind. But it has one qualification. Its truth is confined to the field of non-violence. Violence can, for the moment, completely frustrate the people's voice. But since I work on the field of non-violence only, every true thought expressed or unexpressed counts for me.

"I ask every Briton to support me in my appeal to the British at this very hour to retire from every Asiatic and African possession and at least from India. That step is essential for the safety of the world and for the destruction of Nazism and fascism. In this, I include Japan's 'ism' also. It is a good copy of the two. Acceptance of my appeal will confound all the military plans of all the Axis powers and even of the military advisers of Great Britain.

"If my appeal goes home, I am sure the cost of British interests in India and Africa would be nothing compared to the present ever-growing cost of war to Great Britain. And when one puts morals in the scales, there is nothing but gain to Great Britain, India and the world.

"Though I ask for their withdrawal from Asia and Africa, let me confine myself for the moment to India. The British statesmen talk glibly of India's participation in war. Now, India was never even

formally consulted on the declaration of war. Why should it be? India does not belong to Indians. It belongs to the British. It has been called a British possession. The British practically do with it as they like. They make me, an all-war resister, pay a war tax in a variety of ways. Thus, I pay two pice as war tax on every letter I post, one pice on every postcard, and two annas on every wire I send. This is the lightest side of the dismal picture. But it shows British ingenuity. If I was a student of economics, I could produce startling figures as to what India has been made to pay towards the war, apart from what are miscalled the voluntary contributions. No contribution made to a conqueror can be truly described as voluntary. What a conqueror the Briton makes! He is well saddled in his seat. I do not exaggerate when I say that a whisper of his wish is promptly answered in India. Great Britain may, therefore, be said to be at perpetual war with India, which she holds by right of conquest and through an army of occupation. How does India profit by this enforced participation in Britain's war? The bravery of Indian soldiers profits India nothing.

"Before the Japanese menace overtakes India, India's homsteads are being occupied by the British troops—Indian and non-Indian. The dwellers are summarily ejected and are expected to shift for themselves. They are paid a paltry vacating expense which carries them nowhere. Their occupation is gone. They have to build their cottages and search for their livelihood. These people do not vacate out of a spirit of patriotism. When this incident was referred to me a few days ago, I wrote in these columns that the dispossessed people should be asked to bear their lot with resignation. But my co-workers protested and invited me to go to the evacuees and console them myself or send some one to perform the impossible task. They were right. These poor people should never have been treated as they were. They should have been lodged suitably at the same time that they were asked to vacate.

"People in East Bengal may almost be regarded as amphibious. They live partly on land and partly on the waters of rivers. They have light canoes which enable them to go from place to place. For fear of the Japanese using the canoes, the people have been called upon to surrender them. For a Bengali to part with his canoe is almost like parting with his life. So those who take away his canoe he regards as his enemy.

"Great Britain has to win the war. Need she do so at India's expense? Should she do so?

"But I have something more to add to this sad chapter. The falsity that envelops the Indian life is suffocating. Almost every Indian you meet is discontented. But, he will not own it publicly. The Government employees, high and low, are no exception. I am not giving hearsay evidence. Many British officials know this. But they have evolved the art of taking work from such elements. This all-pervading distrust and falsity make life worthless unless one resists it with one's whole soul.

"You may refuse to believe all I say. Of course, I shall be contradicted. I shall survive the contradictions.

"I have stated what I believe to be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

"My people may or may not approve of this loud thinking. I have consulted nobody. This appeal is being written during my silence day. I am just now concerned with Britain's action. When slavery was abolished in America, many slaves protested, some even wept. But protests and tears notwithstanding, slavery was abolished in law. But the abolition was the result of a bloody war between the South and the North; and so though the Negro's lot is considerably better than before, he still remains the outcaste of high society. I am asking for something much higher. I ask for a bloodless end of an unnatural domination and for a new era, even though there may be protests and wailings from some of us."

On May 14, a *News Chronicle* representative interviewed Gandhi.

Question: "You have recently asked the British to withdraw from India. Do you think it possible in the present circumstances for them to withdraw all at once? To whom are they to entrust the administration?"

Answer: "It has cost me much to come to the conclusion that the British should withdraw from India, and it is costing me still more to work out that conclusion. It is like asking loved ones to part, but it has become a paramount duty. And the beauty and the necessity for withdrawal lie in its being immediate. They and we are both in the midst of fire. If they go, there is a likelihood of both of us being safe. If they do not, Heaven only knows what will happen. I have said in the plainest terms that in my proposal there is no question of entrusting the administration to any person or party.

That would be a necessary consideration, if the withdrawal was part of a settlement. Under my proposal, they have to leave India in God's hands—but in the modern parlance, to anarchy, and that anarchy may lead to internecine warfare for some time or to unrestrained dacoities. From these, a true India will rise in the place of the false one we see."

Question: "How is your policy of non-embarrassment reconcilable with this advice?"

Answer: "My policy of non-embarrassment remains intact in the terms in which I have described it. If the British withdraw, surely there is no embarrassment; not only so, they become eased of a tremendous burden, if they would calmly consider the meaning of the enslavement of a whole people. But if they persist, well knowing that they are surrounded by hatred, they invite embarrassment. I don't produce it by stating the truth, however unpalatable it may appear for the moment."

Question: "Already there are signs of civil insecurity; and would not life be even more insecure, were the present administration suddenly to withdraw?"

Answer: "Of course, there is civil insecurity, and I have already confessed that insecurity is likely to increase very much only to give place to real security. The present insecurity is chronic and, therefore, not so much felt. But a disease that is not felt is worse than one that is felt."

Question: "Were the Japanese to invade India, what would your advice be to the Indian people?"

Answer: "I have already said in my articles that it is just likely that the Japanese will not want to invade India, their prey having gone. But it is equally likely that they will want to invade India, in order to use her ports for strategic purposes. Then, I would advise the people to do the same thing that I have advised them to do now, namely, offer stubborn non-violent non-co-operation, and I make bold to say that, if the British withdraw and the people here follow my advice, then non-co-operation will be infinitely more effective than it can be today, when it cannot be appreciated for the violent British action going on side by side."

Explaining the implications of his suggestion to British to withdraw from India, Gandhi answered some important questions at a press conference on May 18.

Question: "There is a report about some new scheme that you want to propound in one of your *Harijan* articles about non-violent non-co-operation, if any invader came to India. Could you give us an idea?"

Answer: "It is wrong. I have no plan in mind. If I had, I should give it to you. But I think, nothing more need be added when I have said that there should be unadulterated non-violent non-co-operation, and if the whole of India responded and unanimously offered it, I should show that, without shedding a single drop of blood, the Japanese arms—or any combination of arms—can be sterilized. That involves the determination of India not to give any quarter on any point whatsoever, and to be ready to risk the loss of several million lives. But I would consider that cost very cheap and victory won at that cost glorious. That India may not be ready to pay that price may be true. I hope that it is not true, but some such price must be paid by any country that wants to retain its independence. After all, the sacrifice made by the Russians and the Chinese is enormous, and they are ready to risk all. And the same could be said of the other countries also, whether the aggressors or defenders. The cost is enormous. Therefore, in the non-violent technique, I am asking India to risk no more than other countries are risking and which India would have to risk even if she offered the armed resistance."

Question: "But unadulterated non-violent non-co-operation has not been successful against Great Britain. How will it then succeed against a new aggressor?"

Answer: "I combat this statement altogether. Nobody has yet told me that non-violent non-co-operation, unadulterated, has not succeeded. It has not been offered, is true. Therefore, you can say that what has not been offered hitherto is not likely to be offered suddenly when India faces the Japanese arms. I can only hope that in the face of danger, India would be readier to offer non-violent non-co-operation. Perhaps, India is accustomed to the British rule for so many years that the Indian minds or India's masses do not feel the pinch so much as the advent of a new power would be felt. But your question is well put. It is possible that India may not be able to offer non-violent non-co-operation. But a similar question may be put regarding armed resistance. Several attempts have been made and they have not succeeded. Therefore, it will not succeed

against the Japanese. That leads us to the absurd conclusion that India will never be ready for gaining independence, and seeing that I cannot subscribe to any such proposition, I must try again and again till India is ready to respond to the call of non-violent non-co-operation. But if India does not respond to that call, then she must respond to the call of some leader or some organization, wedded to violence. For instance, the Hindu Mahasabha is trying to rouse the Hindu mind for an armed conflict. It remains to be seen whether that attempt succeeds. I for one do not believe it will succeed."

Question: "But would you advise non-violent non-co-operation against the scorched earth policy? Would you resist the attempt to destroy sources of food and water?"

Answer: "Yes, a time may come when I would certainly advise it, for I think it is ruinous and suicidal and unnecessary—whether India believes in non-violent non-co-operation or in violence. And the Russian and the Chinese examples make no appeal to me. If some other country resorts to the methods which I consider to be inhuman, I may not follow them. If the enemy comes and helps himself to crops I may be obliged to leave, because I cannot or care not to defend them, I must resign myself to it. And there is a good example for us. A passage was quoted to me from the Islamic literature. The Caliphs issued definite instructions to the armies of Islam that they should not destroy the utility services, they should not harass the aged and women and children; and I do not know that the arms of Islam suffered any disaster because the armies obeyed those instructions."

Question: "But what about factories—especially factories for the manufacture of munitions?"

Answer: "Suppose, there are factories for grinding wheat or for pressing oil-seeds. I should not destroy them. But the munitions factories, yes; for I would not tolerate the munitions factories in a free India, if I had my way. Textile factories I would not destroy and I would resist all such destruction. However, it is a question of prudence.

"I have not suggested the immediate enforcement of the whole programme in pursuance of the demand for the British withdrawal. It is there, of course. But I am trying, if I am allowed to continue to cultivate and educate public opinion, to show that behind this demand of mine there is no ill will, no malice. It is the most logical

thing that I have suggested. It is in the interest of all, and since it is an entirely friendly act, I am moving cautiously, and watching myself at every step. I will do nothing in haste, but there is the fixed determination behind every act of mine that the British must withdraw.

"I have mentioned anarchy. I am convinced that we are living today in a state of ordered anarchy. It is a misnomer to call such rule as is established in India, a rule which promotes the welfare of India. Therefore, this ordered disciplined anarchy should go, and if there is complete lawlessness in India, as a result, I would risk it, though I believe, and I should like to believe, that twenty-two years of continuous effort at educating India along the lines of non-violence will not have gone in vain, and the people will evolve real popular order out of chaos. Therefore, if I find that all the best effort fails, I would certainly invite the people to resist destruction of their property."

Question: "Can India give her moral sympathy or support to either of the parties to the war?"

Answer: "My personal view is well known. And if I can convert India to my view, there would be no aid to either side. But my sympathies are undoubtedly in favour of China and Russia."

Question: "But what about Britain?"

Answer: "I used to say that my moral support was entirely with Great Britain. I am very sorry to have to confess that today my mind refuses to give that moral support. The British behaviour towards India has filled me with great pain. I was not quite prepared for Mr. Amery's performances or Sir Stafford Cripps mission. These have, in my estimation, put Great Britain morally in the wrong. And, therefore, though I do not wish any humiliation to Britain—and, therefore, no defeat—my mind refuses to give her any moral support."

Question: "What about America?"

Answer: "I expressed my own opinion sometime ago, that it was a wrong thing for America and unfortunate for world peace that America, instead of working—as she could have worked—for peace, identified herself with war."

Question: "But was there any alternative for her?"

Answer: "I am sure that she would have, if she had intended, brought about peace. But it is my firm opinion that America did not

use her opportunity. I know that I have no right to criticize such a big nation. I do not know all the facts that determined America to throw herself into the cauldron. But somehow or other, opinion has forced itself upon me that America could have remained out, and even now it can do so, if she divests herself of the intoxication that her immense wealth has produced. And I would like to repeat what I have said about the withdrawal of the British power from India. Both America and Great Britain lack the moral basis for engaging in this war, unless they put their own houses in order, while making a fixed determination to withdraw their influence and power both from Africa and Asia, and remove the colour bar. They have no right to talk about protecting democracies and protecting civilization and human freedom, until the canker of white superiority is destroyed in its entirety."

Some pressmen asked him what could Sir Stafford Cripps have done in the absence of an agreement between the Congress and the League? "Sir Stafford," Gandhi replied, "could have asked either the Congress or the League to form the cabinet. If he had done so, probably the party they entrusted with responsibility would have succeeded in having the co-operation of the other party. In any event, the Government would then have dealt with the real representatives of their party rather than having their own nominees." Gandhi added: "If the Muslims want anything—no matter what it is—no power on earth can prevent them from having it. For the condition of refusal will be to fight. Supposing the Muslims ask for something which the non-Muslims do not want to give, it means a fight. This applies to both the communities. But my hope is that some day or other, all parties will come to their senses and consent to go to arbitration."

This led to the question; "What is the difference between you and Rajagopalachari's attitude?"

Gandhi replied: "Though he has quoted me in his support, I see the same difference between him and me that there is between chalk and cheese. He yields the right of secession now to buy unity in the hope of keeping away the Japanese. I consider the vivisection of India to be a sin. My statement amounts to the enunciation of the proposition that I cannot prevent my neighbour from committing a sin. Shri Rajagopalachari would be party in the sin, if the neighbour chooses to commit it. I cannot be party. What is more,

I am firmly of the opinion that there is no unity whilst the third party is there to prevent it. It created the artificial division and it keeps it up. In its presence, both the Hindus and the Muslims and for that matter all seemingly conflicting or disgruntled interests and elements will look to it for support and will get it. Their interest is greater than the independence of their country. No one need throw my other statement in my face, namely, that there is no independence without unity. I do not withdraw a word of it. It is an obvious truth. From its contemplation, I have discovered the formula of inviting the British power to withdraw. Their withdrawal does not by itself bring independence. It may induce unity or it may lead to chaos. There is also the risk of another power filling in the vacancy if it is there. If, however, the withdrawal is orderly and voluntary the British not only gain a moral height but secure the ungrudging friendship of a great nation. I wish all the conflicting elements and interests will make a combined effort to rid India of the foreign domination. If they do not, any understanding with them will be like a house built on sand. Fear of the Japanese occupation of India has blinded Shri Rajagopalachari to the obvious truth. Independence sheds all fear—fear of the Japanese, of anarchy, and of the wrath of the British lion."

A correspondent questioned: "Do you know, being confined in Sevagram, how much you are out of touch with the public? If you were not, you would not talk of resisting the Japanese as you do. For, the dislike of the British is so great that the man in the street is ready to welcome the Japanese."

Gandhi replied: "I cannot endorse your proposition that I am out of touch with the public. Though I am confined in Sevagram, I see all sorts of people and I receive correspondence from every nook and corner of India. Probably, therefore, I am more in touch with the people than you can be, though living in a big town. You have not the opportunity that I have of gauging the public mind. But let us grant that what you say is right—I believe that you are partially right—my suppressing the true remedy will not alter the public mind. On the contrary I am showing the futility of hatred. I am showing that hatred injures the hater, never the hated. An imperial power cannot act otherwise than it has been doing. If we are strong, the British become powerless. I am, therefore, trying to wean the people from their hatred by asking them to develop the

strength of mind to invite the British to withdraw and at the same time to resist the Japanese. With the British withdrawal, the incentive to welcome the Japanese goes, and the strength felt in securing the British withdrawal will be used for stemming the Japanese inroad. I endorse C. R.'s proposition that the millions of India can resist the Japanese even without the possession of arms, modern and ancient, if they are properly organized. But I differ from him when he says that this can be done even when the British arms are operating without co-ordination when you force yourself on the British power. Experience teaches us that a hearty co-ordination and co-operation is impossible, where mutual trust and respect are wanting. British presence invites the Japanese, it promotes communal disunion and other discords, and what is, perhaps, the worst of all, deepens the hatred born of impotence. Orderly British withdrawal will turn the hatred into affection and will automatically remove communal distemper. So far as I can see, the two communities are unable to think or see things in their proper prospective, as long as they are under the influence of the third power."

"Is it a fact," asked a correspondent, "that your present attitude towards England and Japan is influenced by the belief that you think the British and the allies are going to be defeated?"

Gandhi replied: "I have no hesitation in saying that it is not true. On the contrary, I said only the other day that the Britisher was hard to beat. He has not known what it is to be defeated. But I have said in my talk for the past twelve months and more that this was not likely to end in a decisive victory for any party. There will be peace when the exhaustion point is reached. This is mere speculation. Britain may be favoured by nature. She has nothing to lose by waiting. And with America as her ally, she has inexhaustible material resources and scientific skill. This advantage is not available to the Axis powers. Thus, I have no decisive opinion about the result of the war. But what is decisive with me is that I am made by nature to side with the weak parties. My policy of non-embarrassment is based upon that nature and it persists. My proposal for the British withdrawal is as much in Britain's interests as India's. Your difficulty arises from your disinclination to believe that Britain can ever do justice voluntarily. My belief in the capacity of non-violence rejects the theory of permanent inelasticity of human nature."

In reply to the question whether his present policy, as revealed by his writings, did not vitiate his own declaration that he was a friend of China, Gandhi said:

"My answer is an emphatic 'no'. I remain the passionate friend of China that I have always claimed to be. I know what loss of freedom means. Therefore, I could not but be in sympathy with China which is my next-door neighbour in distress. And, if I believed in violence and if I could influence India, I would put in motion every force at my command on behalf of China to save her liberty. In making, therefore, the suggestion which I have made about the withdrawal of the British power, I have not lost sight of China. But because I have China in mind, I feel that the only effective way for India to help China is to persuade Great Britain to free India and let a free India make her full contribution to the war effort. Instead of being sullen and discontented, India free will be a mighty force for the good of mankind in general. It is true that the solution I have presented is a heroic solution beyond the ken of Englishmen. But being a true friend of Britain and China and Russia, I must not suppress the solution which I believe to be eminently practical and probably the only one in order to save the situation, and in order to convert the war into a power for good, instead of being what it is, a peril to humanity.

"Pandit Nehru told me yesterday that he had heard people in Lahore and Delhi saying that I have turned pro-Japanese. I could only laugh at the suggestion, for, if I am sincere in my passion for freedom, I could not consciously or unconsciously take a step which will involve India in the position of merely changing masters. If, in spite of my resistance to the Japanese menace with my whole soul, the mishap occurs, of which I have never denied the possibility, then the blame would rest wholly on British shoulders. I have no shadow of doubt about it. I have made no suggestion which, even from the military standpoint, is fraught with the slightest danger to British power or to Chinese. It is obvious that India is not allowed to pull her weight in favour of China. If British power is withdrawn from India in an orderly manner, Britain will be relieved of the burden of keeping the peace in India, and at the same time gain in a free India an ally, not in the cause of empire—because she would have renounced *in toto* all her imperial designs—but in a defence, not pretended but wholly real, of human freedom. That I

assert and that only is the burden of my recent writings and I shall continue to do so, so long as I am allowed by the British power."

To the next question regarding any matured plans for launching some big offensive, Gandhi replied:

"I have never believed in secrecy, nor do I do so now. There are certainly many plans floating in my brain. But just now, I merely allow them to float in my brain. My first task is to educate the public mind in India and the world opinion, in so far as I am allowed to do so. And when I have finished that process to my satisfaction, I may have to do something. That something may be very big, if the Congress is with me and the people are with me. Naturally, I do want to carry the whole of the Congress with me if I can, as I want to carry the whole of India with me. For, my conception of freedom is no narrow conception. It is co-extensive with the freedom of man in all his majesty. I shall, therefore, take no step without the fullest deliberation."

Gandhi observed in *Harijan* dated May 31: "I know that the novelty of the idea and that too at this juncture has caused a shock to many people. But I could not help myself. Even at the risk of being called mad, I had to tell the truth if I was to be true to myself. I regard it as my solid contribution to the war and to India's deliverance from the peril that is threatening. Withdrawal of the hated power is the only way to rid the land of the debasing hatred. The cause gone, the hatred must cease. Of course, the people must not, on any account, lean on the Japanese to get rid of the British power. That were a remedy worse than the disease. But, in this struggle, every risk has to be run in order to cure ourselves of the biggest disease—a disease which has sapped our manhood and has almost made us feel as if we must for ever be slaves. It is an insufferable thing. The cost of the cure, I know, will be heavy. No price is too heavy to pay for the deliverance."

At the end of May, early in the morning, Gandhi gave a talk to one hundred members of the Rashtriya Yuvak Sangh who walked four miles to see him at Sevagram.

"How are we to help in driving away the British from here?" was their first question. Gandhi replied:

"We do not want to drive away the British people from here. It is the British rulers whom we are asking quietly to withdraw. It is the British domination that we want to vanish from our land.

We have no quarrel with the Englishmen, many of whom are my friends, but we want the British rule to end altogether, for that is the poison that corrupts all it touches, that is the obstacle that stops all progress.

"And what is needed for it are two things—the knowledge that the domination is a greater evil than any other evil that we can think of, and that we have to get rid of it no matter what it may cost. The knowledge is so necessary, because the British exercise their power and their domination in all kinds of subtle and insidious ways that it is sometimes difficult to know that we are bound hand and foot. Next is the will to throw off the chains. We have simply to cultivate the will not to do the rulers' bidding. Is it very difficult? How can one be compelled to accept slavery? I simply refuse to do the master's bidding. He may torture me, he may break my bones to atoms, and even kill me. He will then have my dead body, but not my obedience. Ultimately, therefore, it is I who am the victor and not he, for he has failed in getting me to do what he wanted done.

"That is what I am trying to impress both on those whom I want to retire and to those who are bound in their chains. I am going to use all my powers to do so, but not violence—simply because I have no faith in it.

"Two forces of the same type are ranged against each other in the present war. We do not know what will be the upshot. At the present moment, the upshot is the mutual destruction of life and property, and the destruction not alone of the combatants but of the innocent non-combatants. I do not want for our country this power of destruction that we find having full play. I do not want the power of a Hitler, I want the power of a free peasant. I have been trying to identify myself with the peasants all these years, but have not yet succeeded in doing so. What, however, differentiates me from the kisan today is that he is a kisan and a labourer, not by choice but by the force of circumstances. I want to be a kisan and a labourer by choice and when I can make him a kisan and labourer by choice, I can also enable him to throw off the shackles that keep him bound today and that compel him to do the master's bidding.

"For you to achieve identification with them, you, of course, have got to be able-bodied—not athletes like Sandow, but able to do

all the body labour that comes the peasant's way during his day's work. A Sandow may have a beautiful physique, but may not be able to carry a headload from here to Wardha in the heat of the sun, which a peasant can do. We want a physical frame that can endure the sun and the rain and can stand any amount of labour. We want also the will to resist. We want to build up the muscles of the will and the intellect.

"For, that will enable us to do our part in the fight that is in front of us. But I am going to be patient, I am not going to hurry or hustle you. I am busy preparing the atmosphere, and whatever I will do, I shall do having in view the limitations of our people. I know that neither the rulers nor the public opinion understand the implications of my proposal."

"But," asked a volunteer "have we not to see that the remedy may not be worse than the disease? There will be, in the course of the resistance, in spite of all our will to prevent them, clashes and resultant anarchy. May not that anarchy be worse than the present anarchy which you have called ordered anarchy?"

"That is a very proper question," remarked Gandhi. "That is the consideration that has weighed with me all these twenty-two years. I waited and waited, until the country should develop the non-violent strength necessary to throw off the foreign yoke. But my attitude has now undergone a change. I feel that I cannot afford to wait. If I continue to wait, I might have to wait till doomsday. For the preparation that I have prayed for and worked for may never come, and in the meantime, I may be enveloped and overwhelmed by the flames that threaten all of us. That is why I have decided that even at certain risks, which are obviously involved, I must ask the people to resist the slavery. But even that readiness, let me assure you, depends on the non-violent man's unflinching faith. All I am conscious of is that that there is not a trace of violence in the remotest corner of my being, and my conscious pursuit of ahimsa for the last fifty years cannot possibly fail me at this crisis. The people have not my ahimsa, but my ahimsa should help them. There is ordered anarchy around and about us. I am sure that the anarchy that may result, because of the British withdrawal or their refusal to listen to us and our decision to defy their authority, will in no way be worse than the present anarchy. After all, those who are unarmed cannot produce a frightful amount of violence

or anarchy, and I have a faith that out of that anarchy may arise pure non-violence. But to be a passive witness of the terrible violence that is going on, of the terrible anarchy that is going on in the name of resisting a possible foreign aggression, is a thing I can't stand. It is a thing that would make me ashamed of my ahimsa. It is made of sterner stuff."

Gandhi concluded: "I know that what I am saying today is not easy to understand. Language is but a poor vehicle of one's thoughts. What I have said is bound to suffer from the limitations of that vehicle. But I want you to ponder cooly over what I have been saying and writing, and perhaps you will be able to understand me. I am sure that those who cannot or will not understand me will do so in the light of experience, that is, if they survive the present catastrophe."

Leave India Alone

1942

At the beginning of June 1942, Mr. Louis Fischer, an American journalist, interviewed Gandhi at Sevagram for a week. He began: "You did not like the outlines of the post-war settlement proposed by Cripps. But was there nothing desirable in the interim or immediate provisions? Did you not think that, irrespective of the plan for the future, there might be some value in the immediate arrangements which would give your people experience in government and earn you the right to demand freedom after the war?"

"Roughly, this was the spirit in which I approached it," Gandhi replied. "But when I saw the text of the Cripps offer, I was certain that there was no room for co-operation. The main issue was defence. In war time, defence is the chief task of the government. I have no desire to interfere with the actual conduct of the war. I am incompetent to do so. But, Roosevelt has no special training in strategy, or if he has, it is partial."

"The point is," Gandhi added, "that in war time there must be civilian control of the military, even though the civilians are not as well trained in strategy as the military. If the British in Burma wish to destroy the golden pagoda because it is a beacon to Japanese airplanes, then I say you cannot destroy it, because when you destroy it you destroy something in the Burmese soul. When the British come and say, we must remove these peasants to build an aerodrome here, and the peasants must go today, I say, 'Why did you not think of that yesterday and give the poor people time to go, and why don't you find places for them to go to?'"

"If these are the matters which you wish Indians to control," suggested Mr. Fischer, "I am sure General Wavell would have regarded them as interference in the prosecution of the war."

"The British," Gandhi said with a smile, "offered us wartime tasks like the running of the canteens and the printing of stationery,

which are of minor significance. Though I am not a strategist, there are things we could have done, which would have been more conducive to success in the war. The British have fared so badly in the Far East that they could do with help from us."

"You found nothing good in the Cripps proposals?" Mr. Fischer asked.

"I am glad you put this direct and definite question to me," said Gandhi. "No. I found nothing good at all in them."

"You helped recruiting soldiers for the British army in the first World War," Mr. Fischer said. "When this war started, you said you wished to do nothing to embarrass the British Government. Now, obviously, your attitude has changed. What has happened?"

"In the first World War, I had just returned from South Africa," he explained. "I had not yet found my feet. I was not sure of my ground. This did not imply any lack of faith in non-violence. But it had to develop according to circumstances, and I was not sufficiently sure of my ground. There were many experiences between the two wars. Nevertheless, I announced after some talks with the Viceroy in September 1939, that the Congress movement would not obstruct this war. I am not the Congress. In fact, I am not in the Congress. Congress is more anti-British and anti-war than I am, and I have had to curb its desires to interfere with the war effort. Now I have reached certain conclusions. I do not wish to humiliate the British. But the British must go. I do not say that the British are worse than the Japanese."

"Quite the contrary," Mr. Fischer interjected.

"I would not say quite the contrary," he said. "But I do not wish to exchange one master for another. England will benefit morally if she withdraws voluntarily and in good order."

Gandhi then talked about British atrocities in Bengal and elsewhere. He said that he had received letters only that day telling how villagers were being driven from their homes without notice and without compensation in order to make way for the construction of aerodromes. "This", he added "impedes the war effort, although it appears to be part of the war effort. I am more than ever convinced that Britain cannot win this war, unless she leaves India."

"It seems to me," Mr. Fischer said, "that the British can't possibly withdraw altogether. That would mean making a present of India to Japan, and England would never consent to that, nor would the

United States approve. If you demand that the British pack up and go bag and baggage, you are simply asking the impossible; you are barking up a tree. You do not mean, do you, that they must also withdraw their armies?"

For at least two minutes, Gandhi said nothing; he found the gap in his demand. "You are right," he said at last. "No, Britain and America, and other countries too, can keep their armies here and use Indian territory as a base for military operations. I do not wish Japan to win the war. I do not want the Axis to win. But I am sure that Britain cannot win, unless the Indian people become free. Britain is weaker and Britain is morally indefensible, while she rules India. I do not wish to humiliate England."

Mr. Fischer said: "But if India is to be used as a military base by the United Nations, many other things are involved. Armies do not exist in a vacuum. For instance, the United Nations would need good organization on the railroads."

"Oh," Gandhi replied "they could operate the railroads. They would also need order in the ports where they receive their supplies. They could not have riots in Bombay and Calcutta. These matters would require co-operation and common effort."

"I would like to tell you," Mr. Fischer said "that the American statesmen have great sympathy for the cause of Indian freedom. The United States Government tried to dissuade Churchill from making the speech in which he declared that the Atlantic Charter did not apply to India. Important men in Washington are working on the idea of a Pacific Charter, but they tell me that they have not got very far because the first principle of such a charter would be the end of imperialism and how can we announce that while Britain holds India?"

"I am not interested in future promises," Gandhi said. "I am not interested in independence after the war. I want independence now. That will help England win the war."

"Why have you not communicated your plan to the Viceroy?" Mr. Fischer asked. "He should be told that you have no objection now to the use of India as a base for allied military operations."

"No one has asked me," Gandhi replied. "I have written about my proposed civil disobedience movement, in order to prepare the public for it. If you put me some direct questions in writing about this matter, I will answer them in *Harijan*."

Mr. Fischer asked Gandhi for his opinion about the proposals of Rajagopalachari. "I don't know," replied Gandhi, "what his proposals are. I think it unfortunate that he should argue against me and that I should argue with him, so I have given order that, as far as we are concerned, the discussion should be suspended. But the fact is that I do not know what Rajaji proposes."

"Isn't the essence of this scheme," asked Mr. Fischer, "that the Hindus and Muslims collaborate and in common work perhaps discover the technique of peaceful operation?"

"Yes," said Gandhi, "but that is impossible. As long as the third power, England, is here, our communal differences will continue to plague us. Far back, Lord Minto, the then Viceroy, declared that the British had to keep the Muslims and Hindus apart, in order to facilitate the domination of India. This has been the principle of British rule ever since."

In the next interview Mr. Fischer began with the question, "Do you not think that in view of the diversities of India you will need a federation which will satisfy the princes and the Muslims?"

"I am in no position," he remarked, "to say which system would suit us better. First, the British must go. It is a matter of pure speculation what we will do later. The moment the British withdraw the question of religious minorities disappears. If the British withdraw and there is chaos, I cannot say what form will ultimately rise out of the chaos. If I were asked what I would prefer, I would say federation and not centralization. There you must be satisfied with my answer that I am not disturbed by the problem of whether we are to have a federation or not. Perhaps, your cast-iron mind mocks at this. Perhaps, you think that with millions unarmed and accustomed to foreign rule for centuries, we will not succeed in the civil disobedience movement which I have decided to launch."

"No," Mr. Fischer said, "I do not think that. I believe that history is moving fast and that before long you will be an independent country like China. The struggle you began years ago cannot end in any other way."

"I do not want to be independent like China," Gandhi remarked emphatically. "China is helpless even now and in spite of Chiang Kai-shek. Notwithstanding China's heroism and her readiness to risk all in this war, China is not yet completely free. China should be able to say to America and England, 'We will fight our battle

of independence single-handed, without your aid.' That I would call independence."

He added: "I would like you to understand that I am not criticizing China. Only I wanted to emphasize that I do not wish to imitate China. I do not want India to be in the same predicament as China. That is why I am saying that I do not want British and American soldiers here. I do not want Japanese or German soldiers here. The Japanese broadcast everyday that they do not intend to keep India—they only propose to help us win our freedom. I do not welcome their sympathy or help. I know they are not philanthropists. I want for India a respite from all foreign domination. I have become impatient. I cannot wait any longer. Our condition is worse than China's or Persia's. I may not be able to convince Congress. Men who have held office in Congress may not rise to the occasion. I will go ahead, nevertheless, and will address myself directly to the people. But whatever happens, we are unbendable. We may be able to evolve a new order which will astonish the whole world. I would ask you to cast off your prejudices and enter into this new idea of mine of a civil disobedience campaign and try to find flaws in it, if there are any. You will then be able to help our cause and to do justice to yourself as a writer. The literature that is now being produced on India is piffling and of no consequence. There is nothing original in most of it. It is all cast-iron. I ask you to struggle out of that groove. I would like you penetrate through my language to what I am attempting to express. That is difficult, I know; you came here with all the glamour, brilliance, culture, and armed strength of American and British civilization. I would understand your refusing to grasp anything that does not fit into your groove. But if your mind cannot rise above that beaten track, then your days in Sevagram will have been wasted."

"Yes, but will you help me to see the new order you speak of?"

"You see," Gandhi began, "the centre of power now is in New Delhi, or in Calcutta and Bombay, in the big cities. I would have it distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages of India. That will mean that there is no power. In other words, I want the seven hundred thousand dollars now invested in the imperial bank of England withdrawn and distributed among the seven hundred thousand villages. Then each village will have its one dollar which cannot be lost."

"The seven hundred thousand dollars invested in the imperial bank of India," he continued, "could be swept away by a bomb from a Japanese plane, whereas if they were distributed among the seven hundred thousand shareholders, nobody could deprive them of their assets. There will then be voluntary co-operation between these seven hundred thousand units, voluntary co-operation, not co-operation induced by Nazi methods. Voluntary co-operation will produce real freedom and a new order, vastly superior to the new order in Soviet Russia. Some say there is ruthlessness in Russia but that it is exercised for the lowest and the poorest and is good for that reason. For me, it has very little good in it. Some day this ruthlessness will create an anarchy, worse than we have ever seen. I am sure we will escape that anarchy in India. I admit that the future society of India is largely beyond my grasp. But a system like the one I have outlined to you did exist though it undoubtedly had its weakness, otherwise it would not have succumbed before the Moguls and British. I would like to think that parts of it have survived, and that the roots have survived despite the ravages of the British rule. These roots and the stock are waiting to sprout if a few drops of rain fall in the form of a transfer of British power to Indians. What the plant will be like, I do not know. But it will be infinitely superior to anything we have now. Unfortunately the requisite mood of non-violence does not now exist here, but I refuse to believe that all the strenuous work of the last twenty-five years to evolve a new order has been in vain. The Congress party will have an effective influence in shaping the new order, and the Muslim League will also have an effective influence."

"I would like you to pursue this idea of the symbolic seven hundred thousand dollars," Mr. Fischer suggested. "What will villages do with the dollar that has come back to them from the imperial bank of England?"

"One thing will happen," Gandhi asserted. "Today, the shareholders get no return. Intermediaries take it away. If peasants are masters of their dollars, they will use them as they think best."

"A peasant buries his money in the ground," Mr. Fischer said.

"They will not bury their dollars in the ground," Gandhi said, "because they will have to live. The dollars will go back to the bank, their own bank, and utilize it under their direction for the purposes they think best. They may then build windmills or produce

electricity or whatever they like. A central government will evolve, but it will act according to the wishes of the people and will be broad-based on their will."

"The state, I imagine," Mr. Fischer said, "will then build more industries and develop the country industrially."

Gandhi remarked: "You must visualize a central government without the British army. If it holds together without that army, this will be the new order. That is a goal worth working for. It is not an unearthly goal. It is practicable."

"I am certain," Mr. Fischer said, "that you ought to have your independence. I think it would be good for you and good for all of us. Certainly the British have not shown any startling ability to defend their empire or to win its sympathy."

"You must say that to America," Gandhi urged.

"I will say it," Mr. Fischer said, "but not in those terms. We are financing all of Britain's purchases of munitions. We are making sixty thousand planes this year, but a hundred and forty thousand in 1943. As far as America's role in India is concerned, the crisis here has matured a bit too early. If we were making one hundred and forty thousand planes per year now and had two million men at the front, our views on India would receive more attention in London. The British do not understand today what is happening in Asia. With American help they may understand tomorrow."

"Therefore, it is," Gandhi remarked, "that I come to brass tacks and say that the British will understand not while we are reasoning with them and showing them the great justice and feasibility of our proposal, but when we begin to act. That is British history. They are impressed by action, and it is action that we must take now. For the moment, however, I must popularize the idea of an Indian national government now and demonstrate that there is nothing chimerical or visionary about it. It is based on non-violence although I don't need the idea of non-violence to prove the validity or justice of my aim. The same aim might have evolved, even if I were violently inclined. Even if I were violently inclined I might have said, 'Go and don't use India as your military base.' But today I say, 'If you must use India as a base lest someone else appropriate it, use it, stay here on honourable terms and do no harm.' I would go further and add that if the central government which India evolves is military-minded, the British may have its help."

"Well, how do you actually see your impending civil disobedience movement? What shape will it take?"

"In the villages," Gandhi explained, "peasants will stop paying taxes. They will make salt despite official prohibition. This seems a small matter; the salt tax yields only a paltry sum to the British Government. But refusal to pay it will give the peasants courage to think that they are capable of independent action. Their next step will be to seize the land."

"With violence?" Mr. Fischer asked.

"There may be violence," Gandhi replied. "But then again the landlords may co-operate."

"You are an optimist," Mr. Fischer remarked.

"They might co-operate by fleeing," Gandhi said.

"Or," Mr. Fischer said, "they might organize violent resistance."

"There may be fifteen days of chaos," Gandhi said, "but I think we could soon bring that under control."

"I know that you have in the past had a large following among the peasants, but your city working class support is not so big," said Mr. Fischer.

"No," Gandhi acquiesced, "not so big. But this time the working men will act too, because, as I sense the mood of the country, everybody wants freedom—Hindus, Muslims, untouchables, Sikhs, workers, peasants, industrialists, Indian civil servants, and even the princes. The princes know that a new wind is blowing. Things cannot go on as they have been."

"England," he said, "is sitting on an unexploded mine in India and it may explode any day. The hatred and resentment against Britain are so strong here that Britain can get no help for her war effort. Indians enlist in the British army because they want to eat, but they have no feeling in their hearts, which would make them wish to help England."

Mr. Fischer referred to Gandhi's reaction to the reported death of Subhas in an airplane accident. "Do you mean," Gandhi asked, "because I had responded to news that proved to be false?"

"No, but that you regretted the passing of a man who went to fascist Germany and identified himself with it."

"I did it," Gandhi asserted, "because I regard Bose as a patriot of patriots. He may be misguided. I think he is misguided. I have often opposed Bose. Twice I kept him from becoming the President of the

Congress. Finally, he did become the president, although my views often differed from his. But suppose he had gone to Russia or to America to ask aid for India. Would that have made it better?"

"Yes, of course," Mr. Fischer said. "It does make a difference to whom you go."

"I do not want help from anybody to make India free," Gandhi declared. "I want India to save herself."

"Throughout history," Mr. Fischer recalled, "nations and individuals have helped foreign countries. Lafayette went from France to assist America in winning independence from Britain. Thousands of Americans and other foreigners died in Spain to save the Spanish Republic."

"Individuals, yes," Gandhi said. "But America is the ally of the England which enslaves us. And I am not yet certain that the democracies will make a better world, when they defeat the fascists. They may become very much like the fascists themselves."

Mr. Fischer said: "This is where we must agree to differ. I find the concentration of Indians on problems of their freedom to the exclusion of social problems a disappointment and a shortcoming. Bose is a young man with the propensity for dramatic action, and were he to succumb in Germany to the lure of fascism and return to India and make her free but fascist, I think you would be worse off than under British rule."

"There are powerful elements of fascism in British rule," Gandhi asserted, "and in India these are the elements which we see and feel every day. If the British wish to document their right to win the war and make the world better, they must purify themselves by surrendering power in India."

"Your president," Gandhi continued, "talks about the Four Freedoms. Do they include the freedom to be free? We are asked to fight for democracy in Germany, Italy and Japan. But how can we when we haven't got it ourselves?"

"Might some kind of a modified Cripps proposal be acceptable to you?" asked Mr. Fischer.

"No," Gandhi said, "Nothing along the lines of the Cripps offer. I want its complete and irrevocable withdrawal. I am essentially a man of compromise, because I am never sure that I am right. But now it is the unbending future in me that is uppermost. There is no half-way house between withdrawal and non-withdrawal. It is,

of course, no complete physical withdrawal that I ask. I shall insist, however, on the transfer of political power from the British to the Indian people."

"Suppose the British say they will withdraw completely after the war?" Mr. Fischer asked.

"No. In that case, my proposal loses much of its value. I want them to go now, so I can help China and Russia. Today, I am unable to pull my full weight in favour of them. It is my philanthropy that has made me present this proposal. For the time being, India disappears from my gaze. I never wanted independence for India's sake alone. I never wished to play the role of frog in the well."

"You have not felt this way before," Mr. Fischer suggested.

"The whole idea," Gandhi said, "keeps blossoming out within me. The original idea of asking the British to go burst upon me suddenly. It was the Cripps fiasco that inspired the idea. Hardly had he gone, when it seized hold of me."

"Exactly when did the idea occur to you?" Mr. Fischer asked.

"Soon after Cripps's departure. I wrote to Horace Alexander in reply to his letter to me. Thereafter, the idea possessed me. Then began the propaganda. Later, I framed a resolution. My first feeling was, we need an answer to Cripps's failure. What a diabolical thing, if the Cripps mission were without any redeeming feature. Suppose I ask them to go. This idea arose from the crushed hope that had been pretty high in our minds. We had heard good things about Cripps from Jawaharlal and others. Yet the whole mission fell flat. How, I asked myself, am I to remedy this situation? The presence of the British blocks our way. It was during my Monday day of silence that the idea was born in me. From that silence arose so many thoughts that the silence possessed me and also the thoughts possessed me too and I knew I had to act for Russia and China and India. My heart goes out to China. I cannot forget my five hours with Chiang Kai-shek and his attractive partner. Even for China's sake alone, I must do this. I am burdening my thoughts with the world's sorrow."

"Why will it not wait until after the war?" Mr. Fischer asked.

"Because I want to act now and be useful while the war is here," Gandhi replied.

Mr. Fischer inquired: "Have you any organization with which to carry on this struggle?"

"The organization is the Congress party," Gandhi replied. "But if that fails me, I have my own organization, myself. I am a man possessed by an idea. If such a man cannot get an organization, he becomes an organization."

"If you look at this in its historic perspective," Mr. Fischer said, "you are doing a novel and remarkable thing—you are ordaining the end of an empire."

"Even a child can do that," Gandhi replied. "I will appeal to the people's instincts. I may arouse them."

"Let us try," Mr. Fischer suggested, "to see the possible reaction throughout the world. Your very friends, China and Russia, may appeal to you not to launch this civil disobedience movement."

"Let them appeal to me. I may be dissuaded. But, if I can get appeals to them in time, I may convert them. If you have access to men in authority here, tell them this. Discuss this with them and let them show me if there are any flaws in my proposal."

"Have I your authority to say this to the Viceroy?" inquired Mr. Fischer.

"Yes, you have my permission," Gandhi said firmly. "Let him talk to me; I may be converted. I am a reasonable man. I would not like to take any step that would harm China."

"Or America?" Mr. Fischer suggested.

"If America were hurt, it would hurt everybody," he replied.

"Would you wish President Roosevelt to be informed about your attitude?" asked Mr. Fischer.

"Yes," he said, "I do not wish to appeal to anybody. But I would want Mr. Roosevelt to know my plans, my views, and my readiness to compromise. Tell your president I wish to be dissuaded."

"Do you expect drastic action when you launch the movement?" Mr. Fischer asked.

"Yes," he answered. "I expect it any day. I am ready. I know I may be arrested. I am ready."

On June 6, Gandhi submitted a reply to Mr. Fischer's written questions on the implications of the new proposal, the British withdrawal from India.

Question: "You ask the British Government to withdraw immediately from India. Would the Indians thereupon form a national government and what groups or parties would participate in such an Indian government?"

Answer: "My proposal is one-sided for the British Government to act upon, wholly irrespective of what the Indians would do or would not do. I have even assumed temporary chaos on their withdrawal. But if the withdrawal takes place in an orderly manner, it is likely that on their withdrawal, a provisional government will be set up by and from among the present leaders. But another thing may also happen. All those who have no thought of the nation, but only of themselves, may make a bid for power and get together the turbulent forces with which they would seek to gain control somewhere and somehow. I should hope that with the complete, final and honest withdrawal of the British power, the wise leaders will realize their responsibility, forget their differences for the moment and set up a provisional government out of the material left by the British power. As there would be no power regulating the admission or the rejection of parties or persons, to or from the council board, restraint alone will be the guide. If that happens, probably, the Congress, the Muslim League and the states representatives will be allowed to function and they will come to a loose understanding on the formation of a provisional national government. All this is necessarily guess work and nothing more."

Question: "Would that Indian national government permit the United Nations to use Indian territory as a base of military operations against Japan and other Axis powers?"

Answer: "Assuming that the national government is formed and if it answers my expectations, its first act would be to enter into a treaty with the United Nations for the defensive operations against the aggressive powers, it being common cause that India will have nothing to do with any of the fascist powers and India would be morally bound to help the United Nations."

Question: "What further assistance would this Indian national government be ready to render the United Nations in the course of the present war against the fascist aggressors?"

Answer: "If I have any hand in guiding the imagined national government, there would be no further assistance save the toleration of the United Nations on the Indian soil under well-defined conditions. Naturally, there will be no prohibition against any Indian giving his own personal help by way of being a recruit or/and of giving financial aid. It should be understood that the Indian army has been disbanded with the withdrawal of British power. Again, if

I have any say in the councils of the national government, all its power and prestige and resources would be used towards bringing about the world peace. But, of course, after the formation of the national government, my voice may be a voice in the wilderness and nationalist India may go war mad."

Question: "Do you believe this collaboration between the Indian and the allied powers might or should be formulated in a treaty of alliance or an agreement for mutual aid?"

Answer: "I think the question is altogether premature and in any case, it will not much matter whether the relations are regulated by treaty or agreement. I do not even see any difference.

"Let me sum up my attitude. One thing and only one thing for me is solid and certain. This unnatural prostration of a great nation —it is neither 'nations' nor 'peoples'—must cease, if the victory of the allies is to be ensured. They lack the moral basis. I see no difference between the fascist or Nazi powers and the allies. All are exploiters, and all resort to ruthlessness to the extent required to compass their end. America and Britain are very great nations, but their greatness will count as dust before the bar of dumb humanity, whether African or Asiatic. They and they alone have the power to undo the wrong. They have no right to talk of human liberty and all else, unless they have washed their hands clean of the pollution. That necessary wash will be their surest insurance of success, for they will have the good wishes—unexpressed, but no less certain— of millions of dumb Asiatics and Africans. Then, but not till then, will they be fighting for a new order. This is the reality. All else is speculation. I have allowed myself, however, to indulge in it as a test of my bona fides and for the sake of explaining in a concrete manner what I mean by my proposal."

One afternoon, two American journalists came—Mr. Chaplin of the International News Service, and Mr. Belldon of *Life* and *Time*. Both had heard rumours in New Delhi that Gandhi might soon be arrested. So they came post-haste, without waiting for reply giving them an appointment.

He had just ended his talk with Mr. Fischer when they arrived and so he said greeting them: "One American has been vivisecting me. I am now at your disposal."

They had read all kinds of things about Gandhi's latest move, and they were, therefore, anxious to straighten out wrong notions if they

had any. "Why non-violent non-co-operation, rather than honest and straightforward resistance against the Japanese?" Far from preventing the Japanese, the non-violent non-co-operation, they feared, might prove an invitation to them, and would not that be flying from the frying pan into the fire?

He put one counter question: "Supposing England retires from India for strategic purposes, and apart from my proposal—as they had to do in Burma—what would happen? What would India do?"

"That is exactly what we have come to learn from you."

"Well, therein comes my non-violence. For, we have no weapons. Mind you, we have assumed that the Commander-in-Chief of the united American and British armies has decided that India is no good as a base, and that they should withdraw to some other base and concentrate the allied forces there. We cannot help it. Then we have to depend on what strength we have. We have no army, no military resources, no military skill either, worth the name, and non-violence is the only thing that we can fall back upon. Now, in theory, I can prove to you that our non-violent resistance can be wholly successful. We need not kill a single Japanese, we simply give them no quarter."

"But that non-violence can't prevent an invasion?"

"In non-violent technique, of course, there can be nothing like preventing an invasion. They will land, but they will land on an inhospitable shore. They may be ruthless and wipe out all the four hundred millions. That would be complete victory. I know you will laugh at it, saying 'all this is superhuman, if not absurd.' I would say you are right; we may not be able to stand that terror and we may have to go through a course of subjection worse than our present state. But we are discussing the theory."

"But if the British don't withdraw?"

"I do not want the British to withdraw under Indian pressure, nor driven by force of circumstances. I want them to withdraw in their own interest, for their own good name."

"But what happens to your movement, if you are arrested, as we heard you might be? Or, if Mr. Nehru is arrested? Would not the movement go to pieces?"

"No, not if we have worked among the people. Our arrest would then work up the movement, they would stir every one in India to do his little bit."

"Supposing Britain decides to fight to the last man in India, would not your non-violent non-co-operation help the Japanese?" asked Mr. Chaplin reverting to his first question.

"If you mean non-co-operation with the British, you would be right. We have not come to that stage. I do not want to help the Japanese, not even for freeing India. India during the past fifty or more years of her struggle for freedom has learnt the lesson of patriotism and of not bowing to any foreign power. But when the British are offering violent battle, our non-violent battle—our non-violent activity—would be neutralized. Those who believe in armed resistance and in helping the British militarily are and will be helping them. Mr. Amery says he is getting all the men and money they need, and he is right. For the Congress—a poor organization representing the millions of the poor of India—has not been able to collect in years what they have collected in one day by way of, what I would say, so-called voluntary subscription. This Congress can only render non-violent assistance. But let me tell you, if you do not know it, that the British do not want it, they don't set any store by it. But whether they do it or not, violent and non-violent resistance cannot go together. So, India's non-violence can at best take the form of silence—not obstructing the British forces, certainly not helping the Japanese."

"But not helping the British?"

"Don't you see non-violence cannot give any other aid?"

"But the railways, I hope, you won't stop; the services, too, will be, I hope, allowed to function."

"They will be allowed to function, as they are being allowed now."

"Aren't you, then, helping the British by leaving the services and the railways alone?" asked Mr. Belldon.

"We are, indeed. That is our non-embarrassment policy."

"But what about the presence of American troops here? Every American feels that we should help India to win her freedom."

"It's a bad job."

"Because it is said we are here to help Britain and not India?"

"I say it is a bad job, because it is an imposition on India. For it is not at India's request or with India's consent that they are here. It is enough irritation that we were not consulted before being dragged into this war—I am not sure that the Viceroy even consulted his executive council. That is our original complaint.

To have brought the American forces is, in my opinion, to have made the stranglehold on us all the tighter.

"You do not know what is happening in India. It is naturally not your business to go into those things. But let me give you some facts. Thousands of villagers are being summarily asked to vacate their homes and go elsewhere, for the site of their homesteads is needed by the military. Now I ask, where are the villagers to go? Thousands of poor labourers in a certain place, I have heard today, have been asked to evacuate. Paltry compensation is offered them, and they are not even given sufficient notice. This kind of thing will not happen in an independent country. The sappers and miners there would first build homes for these people, the transport would be provided for them and they would be given at least six months' maintenance allowance before they would be uprooted from their surroundings. Are these things to happen, even before the Japanese have come here? There is no other way, but saying to them, 'You must go', and if the British soldiers may remain here, if at all, by virtue of a compact with free India."

"Don't you think Indian people and leaders have some duty to help accelerate the process?"

"You mean by dotting India with rebellions everywhere? No, my invitation to the British to withdraw is not an idle one. It has to be made good by the sacrifice of the inviters. Public opinion has got to act, and it can act only non-violently."

"Is the possibility of strike precluded?" asked Mr. Belldon.

"No," said Gandhi, "strikes can be and have been non-violent. If railways are worked only to strengthen the British hold on India, they need not be assisted. But before I decide to take any energetic measures, I must endeavour to show the reasonableness of my demand. The moment it is complied with, India, instead of being sullen, becomes an ally. Remember, I am more interested than the British in keeping the Japanese out. For, Britain's defeat in Indian waters may mean only the loss of India, but if Japan wins, India loses everything."

"If you regard the American troops as an imposition, would you regard the American Technical Mission also in the same light?" was the next question.

"A tree is judged by its fruit," answered Gandhi succinctly. "I have met Dr. Grady. We have had cordial talks. I have no prejudice

against Americans. I have hundreds, if not thousands of friends, in America. The Technical Mission may have nothing but good-will for India. But my point is that all the things that are happening are not happening at the invitation or wish of India. Therefore, they all are suspect. We cannot look upon them with philosophic calmness, for the simple reason that we cannot close our eyes, as I have said, to the things that are daily happening in front of our eyes. Areas are being vacated and turned into military camps, people being thrown on their own resources. Hundreds, if not thousands, on their way from Burma perished without food and drink, and the wretched discrimination stared even these miserable people in the face. One route for the whites, another for the blacks. Provision of food and shelter for the whites, none for the blacks! And discrimination even on their arrival in India! India is being ground down to dust and humiliated, even before the Japanese advent, not for India's defence—and no one knows for whose defence. And so one fine morning I came to the decision to make this honest demand: 'For Heaven's sake, leave India alone. Let us breathe the air of freedom. It may choke us, suffocate us, as it did the slaves on their emancipation. But I want the present sham to end.'"

"It is British troops you have in mind, not the American?"

"It does not make for me the slightest difference. The whole policy is one and indivisible."

"Is there any hope of Britain listening?"

"I will not die without that hope. And if there is a long lease of life for me, I may even see it fulfilled. For, there is nothing unpractical in the proposal, no insuperable difficulties about it. Let me add that if Britain is not willing to do so whole-heartedly, Britain does not deserve to win."

"Would a free India declare war against Japan?"

"Free India need not do so. She simply becomes the ally of the allied powers, simply out of gratefulness for the payment of a debt, however overdue. Human nature thanks the debtor, when he discharges the debt."

"How would this alliance fit in with India's non-violence?"

"It is a good question. The whole of India is not non-violent. If the whole of India had been non-violent, there would have been no need for my appeal to Britain, nor would there be any fear of a Japanese invasion. But my non-violence is represented possibly by

a hopeless minority, or, perhaps, by India's dumb millions who are temperamentally non-violent. But there, too, the question may be asked: 'What have they done?' They have done nothing, I agree; but they may act when the supreme test comes, and they may not. I have no non-violence of millions to present to Britain, and what we have has been discounted by the British as non-violence of the weak. So all I have done is to make this appeal on the strength of bare inherent justice, so that it might find an echo in the British heart. It is made from a moral plane, and even as they don't hesitate to act desperately in the physical field and take grave risks, let them for once act desperately on the moral field and declare that India is independent today, irrespective of India's demand."

"But what does a free India mean, if as Jinnah said, Muslims will not accept Hindu rule?"

"I have not asked the British to hand over India to the Congress or to Hindus. Let them entrust India to God or, in modern parlance, to anarchy. Then, all parties will fight one another like dogs, or will, when real responsibility faces them, come to a reasonable agreement. I shall expect non-violence to arise out of that chaos."

"But to whom are the British to say 'India is free'?"

"To the world," retorted Gandhi, without a moment's hesitation. "Automatically Indian army is disbanded from that moment, and they decide to pack up, as soon as they can. Or, they may declare they would pack up only after the war is over, but that they would expect no help from India, impose no taxes, raise no recruits—beyond what help India chooses to give voluntarily. The British rule will cease from that moment, no matter what happens to India afterwards. Today, it is all a hypocrisy, unreality. I want that to end. The new order will come only when that falsity ends."

"It is an unwarranted claim Britain and America are making," said Gandhi, "the claim of saving democracy and freedom. It is a wrong thing to make that claim, when there is this terrible tragedy of holding a whole nation in bondage."

"What can America do to have your demand implemented?"

"If my demand is admitted to be just beyond cavil, America can insist on the implementing of the Indian demand as a condition of her financing Britain and supplying her with her matchless skill in making war machines. He who pays the piper has the right to call the tune. Since America has become the predominant partner

in the allied cause, she is partner also in Britain's guilt. The allies have no right to call their cause to be morally superior to the Nazi cause, so long as they hold in custody the fairest part and one of the most ancient nations of the earth."

Mr. Preston Grover, the representative of the Associated Press of America, arrived in Wardha in mid-June for an interview with Gandhi. "There has been a great deal of questioning in America and India," he said, "as to the nature of your activities during the war. I should like to know what it will be like."

"But can you tell me when the war will end?" asked Gandhi laughing.

Coming to the point, Mr. Grover asked: "There is a good deal of speculation that you are planning some new movement. What is the nature of it?"

"It depends on the response made by the Government and the people. I am trying to find out the public opinion here and also the reaction on the world outside."

"When you speak of the response, you mean the response to your new proposal?"

"Yes," said Gandhi, "I mean response to the proposal that the British Government in India should end today. Are you startled?"

"I am not. You have been asking for it and working for it."

"That's right. I have been working for it for years. But now it has taken definite shape and I say that the British power in India should go today for the world peace, for China, for Russia and for the allied cause. I shall explain to you how it advances the allied cause. Complete Independence frees India's energies and frees her to make her contribution to the world crisis. Today the allies are carrying the burden of a huge corpse, a huge nation lying prostrate at the feet of Britain, I would even say at the feet of the allies. For America is the predominant partner, financing the war, giving her mechanical ability and her resources which are inexhaustible. America is, thus, a partner in the guilt."

"Do you see a situation when after full independence is granted American and allied troops can operate from India?"

"I do. It will be only then that you will see real co-operation. Otherwise, all the effort you put up may fail. Just now, Britain is having India's resources, because she is her possession. Tomorrow whatever the help, it will be real help from a free India."

"You think India in control interferes with allied action to meet Japan's aggression?"

"It does."

"When I mentioned allied troops operating, I wanted to know whether you contemplated complete shifting of the present troops from India?"

"Not necessarily."

"It is on this that there is a lot of misconception."

"You have to study all I am writing. I have discussed the whole question in the current issue of *Harijan*. I don't want them to go on condition that India becomes entirely free. I cannot, then, insist on their withdrawal, because I want to resist with all my might the charge of inviting Japan to India."

"But suppose your proposal is rejected, what will be your next move?"

"It will be a move which will be felt by the whole world. It may not interfere with the movement of British troops, but it is sure to engage British attention. It would be wrong of them to reject my proposal and say India should remain a slave in order that Britain may win or be able to defend China. I cannot accept that degrading position. India, free and independent, will play a prominent part in defending China. Today, I do not think she is rendering any real help to China. We have followed the non-embarrassment policy so far. We will follow it even now. But we cannot allow the British Government to exploit it in order to strengthen the stranglehold on India. And today it amounts to that. The way, for instance, in which the thousands are being asked to vacate their homes with nowhere to go to, no land to cultivate, no resources to fall back upon, is the reward of our non-embarrassment. This should be impossible in any free country. I can't tolerate India submitting to this kind of treatment. It means greater degradation and servility, and when a whole nation accepts servility, it means good-bye for ever to freedom."

"All you want is the civil grip relaxed. You won't then hinder military activity?"

"I don't know. I want unadulterated independence. If military activity serves but to strengthen the stranglehold, I must resist that too. I am no philanthropist to go on helping at the expense of my freedom. And what I want you to see is that a corpse cannot

give any help to a living body. The allies have no moral cause for which they are fighting, so long as they are carrying this double sin on their shoulders, the sin of India's subjection and the subjection of the Negroes and African races."

Mr. Grover tried to draw a picture of a free India after an allied victory. Gandhi mentioned, as the boons of the first World War, the Rowlatt Act and martial law in Amritsar. Mr. Grover mentioned more economic and industrial prosperity—by no means due to the grace of the Government but by the force of circumstances and economic prosperity—was a step further forward to swaraj. Gandhi said that few industrial gains were wrung out of unwilling hands. He set no store by such gains after this war. Those gains may be further shackles, and it was a doubtful proposition whether there would be any gains, when one had in mind the industrial policy that was being followed during the war. Mr. Grover did not press the point seriously.

"Do you not expect any assistance from America in persuading Britain to relinquish her hold on India?" asked Mr. Grover.

"I do, indeed," replied Gandhi.

"With any possibility of success?"

"There is every possibility, I should think. I have every right to expect America to throw her full weight on the side of justice, if she is convinced of the justice of the Indian cause."

"You don't think the American Government is committed to the British remaining in India?"

"I hope not. But British diplomacy is so clever that America, even though it may not be committed, and in spite of the desire of President Roosevelt and the people to help India, it may not succeed. British propaganda is so well organized in America against Indian cause that the few friends India has there have no chance of being effectively heard. And the political system is so rigid that public opinion does not affect the administration."

"It may, slowly," said Mr. Grover apologetically.

"Slowly?" exclaimed Gandhi. "I have waited long, and I can wait no longer. It is a terrible tragedy that forty crores of people should have no say in this war. If we have the freedom to play our part, we can arrest the march of Japan and save China."

"What specific things would be done by India to save China, if India is declared independent?" asked Mr. Grover.

"Great things, I can say at once, although I may not be able to specify them today," said Gandhi. "For, I don't know what government we shall have. We have various political organizations here which I expect would be able to work out a proper national solution. Just now, they are not solid parties, they are often acted upon by the British power, they look up to it and its frown or its favour means much to them. The whole atmosphere is corrupt and rotten. Who can foresee the possibilities of a corpse coming to life? At present, India is a dead weight to the allies."

"By dead weight, you mean a menace to Britain and to American interests here?"

"I do. It is a menace in that you never know what sullen India will do at a given moment."

"No, but I want to make myself sure that if genuine pressure was brought to bear on Britain by America, there would be solid support from yourself!"

"Myself? I do not count with the weight of seventy-three years on my shoulders. But you get the co-operation, whatever it can give willingly, of a free and mighty nation. My co-operation is, of course, there. I exercise what influence I can by my writings from week to week. But India's is an infinitely greater influence. Today, because of widespread discontent, there is not that active hostility to the Japanese advance. The moment we are free, we are transformed into a nation prizing its liberty and defending it with all its might and, therefore, helping the allied cause."

"May I concretely ask: will the difference be the difference that there is between what Burma did and what, say, Russia is doing?"

"You might put it that way. They might have given Burma independence after separating it from India. But they did nothing of the kind. They stuck to the same old policy of exploiting her. There was little co-operation from Burmans; on the contrary, there was hostility or inertia. They fought neither for their own cause, nor for the allied cause. Now take a possible contingency. If the Japanese compel the allies to retire from India to a safer base, I can't say today that the whole of India will be up in arms against the Japanese. I have a fear that they may degrade themselves as some Burmans did. I want India to oppose Japan to a man. If India was free, she would do it, it would be new experience to her, in twenty-four hours her mind would be changed. All parties would, then, act as

one man. If this live independence is declared today, I have no doubt India becomes a powerful ally."

"May I finally ask you about your attitude to Rajaji's move?" asked Mr. Grover referring to C. R.'s crusade for the formation of a national government. "He can't be motivated by the British Government. His position happens to harmonize with them."

"You are right," said Gandhi. "It is fear of the Japanese that makes him tolerate the British rule. He would postpone the question of freedom until after the war. On the contrary, I say that if the war is to be decisively won, India must be freed to play her part today. I find no flaw in my position. I have arrived at it after considerable debating within myself. I am doing nothing in hurry or anger. There is not the slightest room in me for accommodating the Japanese. No, I am sure that India's independence is not only essential for India but for China and the allied cause."

"What are the exact steps by which you will save China?"

"The whole of India's mind would be turned away from Japan. Today it is not. C. R. knows it, and it worries him as it should worry any sane patriot. It worries me no less, but it drives me to a contrary conclusion. India lying at the feet of Britain may mean China lying at the feet of Japan. I cannot help using this language. I feel it. You may think it startling and big. But why should it be startling? Think of 400 million people hungering for freedom. They want to be left alone. They are not savages. They have an ancient culture, ancient civilization, such variety and richness of languages. Britain should be ashamed of holding these people as slaves. You may say, 'You deserve it!' If you do, I will simply say it is not right for any nation to hold another in bondage."

"I agree," said Mr. Grover.

"I say even if a nation should want to be in bondage, it should be derogatory to one's dignity to keep it in bondage. But you have your own difficulties. You have yet to abolish slavery."

"In United States, you mean?"

"Yes, your racial discrimination, your lynch law and so on. But you don't want me to remind you of these things."

Replying to a correspondent who asked for the clarification of his demand for British withdrawal, Gandhi wrote:

"The difficulty about the confusion in the public mind by the contemplated stay of the allied troops in the country is very real.

Neither the masses nor even the classes will appreciate the necessity of the military operations of the allied powers after the declaration of withdrawal. But if the necessity is proved, the public may be expected to reconcile themselves to the inevitable.

"There was obviously a gap in my first writing. I filled it in as soon as it was discovered by one of my numerous interviewers. Non-violence demands the strictest honesty, cost what it may. The public have, therefore, to suffer my weakness, if weakness it may be called. I could not be guilty of asking the allies to take a step which would involve certain defeat. I could not guarantee foolproof non-violent action to keep the Japanese at bay. Abrupt withdrawal of the allied troops might result in Japan's occupation of India and China's sure fall. I had not the remotest idea of any such catastrophe resulting from my action. Therefore, I feel that if, in spite of the acceptance of my proposal, it is deemed necessary by the allies to remain in India to prevent Japanese occupation, they should do so, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by the national government that may be set up after the British withdrawal.

"The writer's argument about Britain having no cause left for pursuing the war, if she accepts my proposal and logically follows it in Africa, is sound. But that is the acid test proposed. India has every right to examine the implications of high-sounding declarations about justice, preservation of democracy, freedom of speech and individual liberty. If a band of robbers have among themselves a democratic constitution in order to enable them to carry on their robbing operations more effectively, they do not deserve to be called a democracy. Is India a democracy? Are the states a democracy? Britain does not deserve to win the war on the ground of justice if she is fighting to keep her Asiatic and African possessions. I am not unaware of the tremendous change in Britain's economic policy that the acceptance of my proposal involves. But that change is a vital necessity, if this war is to have a satisfactory ending.

"Who knows if Britain's acceptance of my proposal will not by itself mean an honourable end of the war, resulting in a change even in the mentality of the Axis powers?

"The writer is afraid that my reconciliation to the presence of the British troops would mean a descent on my part from my non-violent position. I hold that my non-violence dictates a recognition of the vital necessity. Neither Britain nor America share

my faith in non-violence. I am unable to state that the non-violent effort will make India proof against the Japanese or any other aggression. I am not able even to claim that the whole of India is non-violent in the sense required. In the circumstances, it would be hypocritical on my part to insist on the immediate withdrawal of the allied troops as an indispensable part of my proposal. It is sufficient for me to declare that so far as India is concerned, she does not need troops to defend herself, having no quarrel with Japan. But India must not, by any act of hers, short of national suicide, let China down, or put the allied powers in jeopardy. So long, therefore, as India lacks faith in the capacity of non-violence to protect her against aggression from without, the demand for the withdrawal of the allied troops, during the pendency of the war, would itself be an act of violence, if the controllers of the troops hold it to be necessary for their defence to keep them in India for that purpose and that alone."

Disapproving of Sir Stafford's description of his appeal for the withdrawal of the British power as a walk-out, Gandhi stated:

"The appeal is made in no offensive mood. It is the friendliest thing that I could do. It is conceived in the interest of the allied cause. I have made it in a purely non-violent spirit and as a non-violent step. But this is merely personal to me. It is necessary to remember in considering my proposal that it is essentially a non-violent gesture. Such non-violence as India has, or may have, becomes impotent without the withdrawal of the British power, even as that part of India which will put up an armed fight becomes impotent. The step that I have conceived overcomes all difficulties, shuts all controversy about violence and non-violence and immediately frees India to offer her best help to the allied cause, more especially to China which is in imminent danger. I am convinced that the independence of India, which the withdrawal of the British power involves, would ensure China's freedom and put the allied cause on an unassailable basis."

Replying to the criticism of *The Times* on his latest proposal, he observed:

"Every time the nationalists have suggested a solution, however sound intrinsically, there has been distortion of their speeches and writings, followed by persecution. My latest proposal conceived in the friendliest spirit and, in my opinion, intrinsically sound, has

already begun to be distorted. I regard my proposal as foolproof. The operations of the allied forces against Japanese aggression have been left intact under my proposal which amounts to this, that Britain should become true to her declaration, withdraw from India as conqueror and, therefore, controller of her destiny, and leave India to shape her own destiny without the slightest interference. This, as I can see, puts her case on a moral basis and gives her in India a great ally, not in the cause of imperialism but in the cause of human freedom. If there is anarchy in India, Britain alone will be responsible, not I. What I have said is that I would prefer anarchy to the present slavery and consequent impotence of India. Any person, however great he may be, who distorts the proposals I have made, will be condemned by history as an enemy of the allied cause."

Why Withdrawal

1942

On June 14, 1942, Gandhi addressed the following letter from Sevagram to Marshal Chiang Kai-shek:

"Dear Generalissimo,

"I can never forget the five hours' close contact I had with you and your noble wife in Calcutta. I had always felt drawn towards you in your fight for freedom, and that contact and our conversation brought China and her problems still nearer to me. Long ago, between 1905 and 1913 when I was in South Africa, I was in constant touch with the small Chinese colony in Johannesburg. I knew the Chinese first as clients, and then as comrades in the Indian passive resistance struggle in South Africa. I came in touch with them in Mauritius also. I learnt then to admire their thrift, industry, resourcefulness and internal unity. Later in India, I had a very fine Chinese friend living with me for a few years and we all learnt to like him.

"I have thus felt greatly attracted towards your great country and, in common with my countrymen, our sympathy has gone out to you in your terrible struggle. Our mutual friend, Jawaharlal Nehru, whose love of China is only excelled, if at all, by his love of his own country, has kept us in intimate touch with the developments of the Chinese struggle.

"Because of this feeling I have towards China and my earnest desire that our two great countries should come closer to one another and co-operate to their mutual advantage, I am anxious to explain to you that my appeal to the British power to withdraw from India is not meant in any shape or form to weaken India's defence against the Japanese or embarrass you in your struggle. India must not submit to any aggressor or invader and must resist him. I would not be guilty of purchasing the freedom of my country at the cost of your country's freedom. That problem does not arise before me,

as I am clear that India cannot gain her freedom in this way, and a Japanese domination of either India or China would be equally injurious to the other country and to world peace. That domination must, therefore, be prevented and I should like India to play her natural and rightful part in this.

"I feel India cannot do so, while she is in bondage. India has been a helpless witness of the withdrawals from Malaya, Singapore and Burma. We must learn the lesson from these tragic events and prevent, by all means at our disposal, a repetition of what befell these unfortunate countries. But unless we are free, we can do nothing to prevent it, and the same process might well occur again, crippling India and China disastrously. I do not want a repetition of this tragic tale of woe.

"Our proffered help has repeatedly been rejected by the British Government and the recent failure of the Cripps mission has left a deep wound which is still running. Out of that anguish has come the cry for immediate withdrawal of British power so that India can look after herself and help China to the best of her ability.

"I have told you of my faith in non-violence and my belief in the effectiveness of this method, if the whole nation could turn to it. That faith in it is as firm as ever. But I realize that India today as a whole has not that faith and belief, and the government in free India would be formed from the various elements composing the nation.

"Today the whole of India is impotent and feels frustrated. The Indian army consists largely of people who have joined up because of economic pressure. They have no feeling of a cause to fight for, and in no sense are they a national army. Those of us who would fight for a cause, for India and China, with armed forces or with non-violence, cannot, under the foreign heel, function as they want to. And yet our people know for certain that India free can play even a decisive part not only on her own behalf, but also on behalf of China and world peace. Many like me feel that it is not proper or manly to remain in this helpless state and allow events to overwhelm us, when a way to effective action can be opened to us. They feel, therefore, that every possible effort should be made to ensure independence and that freedom of action which is so urgently needed. This is the origin of my appeal to the British power to end immediately the unnatural connection between Britain and India.

"Unless we make the effort, there is grave danger of public feeling in India going into wrong and harmful channels. There is every likelihood of subterranean sympathy for Japan growing simply in order to weaken and oust British authority in India. This feeling may take the place of robust confidence in our ability never to look to the outsiders for help in winning our freedom. We have to learn self-reliance and develop the strength to work out our own salvation. This is only possible if we make a determined effort to free ourselves from bondage. That freedom has become a present necessity to enable us to take our due place among the free nations of the world.

"To make it perfectly clear that we want to prevent in every way Japanese aggression, I would personally agree, that the allies might, under treaty with us, keep their armed forces in India and use it as a base for operation against the threatened Japanese attack.

"I need hardly give you my assurance that, as the author of the new move in India, I shall take no hasty action. And whatever action I may recommend will be governed by the consideration that it should not injure China, or encourage Japanese aggression in India or China. I am trying to enlist world opinion in favour of a proposition which to me appears self-proved and which must lead to the strengthening of India's and China's defence. I am also educating public opinion in India and conferring with my colleagues. Needless to say that any movement against the British Government with which may I be connected will be essentially non-violent. I am straining every nerve to avoid a conflict with British authority. But if in the vindication of the freedom which has become an immediate desideratum, this becomes inevitable, I shall not hesitate to run any risk, however great.

"Very soon, you will have completed five years of war against Japanese aggression and invasion and all the sorrow and misery that these have brought to China. My heart goes out to the people of China in deep sympathy and admiration for their heroic struggle and endless sacrifices in the cause of their country's freedom and integrity against tremendous odds. I am convinced that this heroism and sacrifice cannot be in vain; they must bear fruit. To you, to Madame Chiang and to the great people of China, I send my earnest and sincere wishes for your success. I look, forward to the day, when a free India and a free China will co-operate together in

friendship and brotherhood for their own good and for the good of Asia and the world."

On July 1, he wrote the following letter to President Roosevelt:

"Dear Friend—I twice missed coming to your great country. I have the privilege of having numerous friends there, both known and unknown to me. Many of my countrymen have received and are still receiving higher education in America. I know too that several have taken shelter there. I have profited greatly by the writings of Thoreau and Emerson. I say this to tell you how much I am connected with your country. Of Britain I need say nothing beyond mentioning that, in spite of my intense dislike of British rule, I have numerous personal friends in England whom I love as dearly as my own people. I had my legal education there. I have, therefore, nothing but good wishes for your country and Great Britain. You will, therefore, accept my word that my present proposal, that the British should unreservedly and without reference to the wishes of the people of India immediately withdraw their rule, is prompted by the friendliest intentions. I would like to turn into goodwill the ill will which, whatever may be said to the contrary, exists in India towards Great Britain, and thus enable the millions of India to play their part in the present war.

"My personal position is clear. I hate all war. If, therefore, I could persuade my countrymen, they would make a most effective and decisive contribution in favour of an honourable peace. But I know that all of us have not a living faith in non-violence. Under foreign rule, however, we can make no effective contribution of any kind in this war, except as helots.

"The policy of the Indian National Congress, largely guided by me, has been one of non-embarrassment to Britain, consistently with the honourable working of the Congress, admittedly the largest political organization of the longest standing in India. The British policy as exposed by the Cripps mission and rejected by almost all parties has opened our eyes and has driven me to the proposal I have made. I hold that the full acceptance of my proposal and that alone can put the allied cause on an unassailable basis. I venture to think that the allied declaration that the allies are fighting to make the world safe for freedom of the individual and for democracy sounds hollow, so long as India and, for that matter, Africa, are exploited by Great Britain, and America has the Negro problem in her own

home. But in order to avoid all complications, in my proposal I have confined myself to India. If India becomes free the rest must follow, if it does not happen simultaneously.

"In order to make my proposal foolproof, I have suggested that, if the allies think it necessary, they may keep their troops, at their own expense, in India, not for keeping internal order but for preventing Japanese aggression and defending China. So far as India is concerned, she must become free even as America and Great Britain are. The allied troops will remain in India during the war under treaty with the Free India Government that may be formed by the people of India without any outside interference, direct or indirect.

"It is on behalf of this proposal that I write this to enlist your active sympathy.

"I hope that it will commend itself to you.

"Mr. Louis Fischer is carrying this letter to you.

"If there is any obscurity in my letter, you have but to send me word and I shall try to clear it.

"I hope finally that you will not resent this letter as an intrusion but take it as an approach from a friend and a well-wisher of the allies."

"My proposal for the withdrawal of the British power," he wrote on June 22, "involves two actions. One is to deal with the present emergency, and the other to secure freedom from British supremacy. The second admits of delay. There is a lot of confusion about its implications. I am trying to the best of my ability, to deal with the questions as they arise from time to time." He added:

"The first admits of no delay and demands specific action irrespective of the proposal for British withdrawal. This is in connection with (1) the behaviour of troops, (2) the impending salt famine, (3) control of food grains, (4) evacuation for the sake of the military, (5) discrimination between Europeans and Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmans on the one hand and Indians on the other.

"On the first item, the people have the law and public opinion wholly on their side. The government machinery is always slow to move, more so now, when it is pre-mortgaged for military preparations. People must everywhere learn to defend themselves against misbehaving individuals, no matter who they are. The question of non-violence and violence does not arise. No doubt the non-violent

way is always the best, but where that does not come naturally the violent way is both necessary and honourable. Inaction here is rank cowardice and unmanly. This must be shunned at all cost. Pandit Nehru told me that, at the stations in the north, platform hawkers have banded themselves for self-defence, so the troops are careful at those stations.

"As to salt famine, the law is not quite on the people's side, but right is wholly on their side. I am hoping that the Government will put the widest construction on the clause referring to salt in the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and allow people to manufacture salt, wherever they can. And I would advise them to manufacture salt even at the risk of prosecution. Necessity knows no law. A starving man will help himself to food wherever he finds it. Vishwamitra did so.

"Number three is difficult to deal with. But the same rule applies as to the second. Food cannot be manufactured as easily as salt. It is up to the merchants to band themselves to do what they can and force the hands of Government to do the right thing by suggesting wise rules for the supply of food to the poor people at fixed prices. If this is not done in time looting shops is sure to be a daily event.

"As to four, I have no doubt that the authorities may not ask people to vacate except where they are ready to offer equivalent land and buildings and cart the people and their belongings to the places prepared for them and pay them a living wage till they find suitable occupation. The people, if they have nowhere to move to, should simply refuse to vacate and suffer the consequences.

"As to the fifth, the people should refuse to submit to discrimination and it will break down. Most of these difficulties take place because we have cultivated the habit of submitting to them. In the words of Lord Willingdon, we must learn resolutely to say 'no', when that is the real answer possible, and take the consequence."

"You do not hear the radio messages," wrote a correspondent. "They interpret your writings as if your leanings were in favour of the Axis powers and you had now veered round to Subhas Babu's views about receiving outside help to overthrow the British rule. I would like you to clear your position in this matter."

Gandhi replied: "I have no desire whatsoever to woo any power to help India in her endeavour to free herself from the foreign yoke. I have no desire to exchange the British for any other rule. Better the enemy I know, than the one I do not. I have never attached

the slightest importance or weight to the friendly professions of the Axis powers. If they come to India they will come not as deliverers but as sharers in the spoil. There can, therefore, be no question of my approval of Subhas Babu's policy. The old difference of opinion between us persists. This does not mean that I doubt his sacrifice or his patriotism. But my appreciation of his patriotism and sacrifice cannot blind me to the fact that he is misguided and that his way can never lead to India's deliverance. If I am impatient of the British yoke, I am so because India's sullenness and suppressed delight of the man in the street over British reverses are dangerous symptoms which may lead to the success of Japanese designs upon India, if they are not dealt with in the proper manner; whereas India finding herself in possession of complete freedom will never want the Japanese to enter India. India's sullenness and discontent will be changed as if by magic into joyful and hearty co-operation with the allies in consolidating and preserving her liberty from any and every evil design."

In *Harijan* dated July 5, Gandhi explained as to why he was not against retention of troops in India:

"I have to pay a heavy price for having drawn up an entrancing picture of a free India without a single British soldier. Friends are confounded now to discover that my proposal admits of the presence of British and even American troops under any circumstance at all. In vain, do I argue that the allied troops, if they remain, will do so not to exercise authority over the people, or at India's expense, but they will remain under treaty with the Government of free India at the United Nations' expense for the sole purpose of repelling Japanese attack and helping China.

"It has been pointed out that not to consent to the allied troops remaining in India during the period of the war is to hand over India and China to Japan, and to ensure the defeat of the allied powers. This could never have been contemplated by me. The only answer, therefore, to give was to suffer the presence of the troops, but under circumstance the reverse of the existing. They will remain under permission of free India, and not at all in the role of masters but of friends.

"My proposal presupposes shedding of all fear and distrust. If we have confidence in ourselves, we need neither fear nor suspect the presence of allied troops.

"May I suggest also that it is altogether premature and wrong to pore over the weakest points of a very difficult project which may not be accepted even with the troops remaining in India. It will be most assuredly an event of the century and may be a turning-point in the war, if Britain can honestly perform the act of renouncing India with all that the renunciation would mean. The virtue and the value of the renunciation, in my opinion, will not be affected in the least, because the allied troops will be operating in India with the sole object of preventing Japanese attack. After all, India is as much interested as the allies in warding off the attack, and yet under my proposal, India will not have to pay a single pie over the expenses of the troops.

"As I have already stated in the previous issue of *Harijan*, the British acceptance of my proposal may itself lead to a most honourable peace and hence automatic withdrawal of the troops. I would, therefore, ask the doubters to concentrate their attention upon the grandeur of the proposed renunciation and help to the utmost of their power the fruition of the great act. Let them not dread the presence of the troops in India for the purpose indicated, but regard it as an inevitable part of the proposal so as to make it not only justifiable but foolproof. So far as I can see, free India will run no risk by their presence. Her freedom will certainly suffer no diminution thereby.

"The implications of my proposal are: (1) India becomes free of all financial obligation to Britain; (2) The annual drain to Great Britain stops automatically; (3) All taxation ceases except what the replacing government imposes or retains; (4) The dead weight of an all-powerful authority keeping under subjection the tallest in the land is lifted at once; (5) In short, India begins a new chapter in her national life, as I shall hope, to affect the fortunes of the war with non-violence as her predominant sanction. This non-violence no longer will take the shape of non-co-operation and the like. It will express itself in her ambassadors going to the Axis powers, not to beg for peace but to show them the futility of war of achieving an honourable end. This can only be done, if and when Britain sheds the gains of perhaps the most organized and successful violence the world has seen.

"All this may not come to pass. I do not mind. It is worth fighting for, it is worth staking all that the nation has."

The Working Committee met at Wardha on July 6 with Gandhi in attendance. Its resolution was published on July 14:

"The events happening from day to day, and the experience that the people of India are passing through, confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and affecting the fortunes of the war that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interest of India, but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another.

"Ever since the outbreak of the World War, the Congress has studiedly pursued a policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective, it deliberately gave it a symbolic character in the hope that this policy of non-embarrassment, carried to its logical extreme, would be duly appreciated, and that real power would be transferred to popular representatives, so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realization of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It had also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India.

"These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India, and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. In the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, Congress representatives tried their best to achieve a minimum, consistent with the national demand, but to no avail. This frustration has resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill will against Britain and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. The Congress Working Committee view this development with grave apprehension, as this unless checked, will inevitably lead to a passive acceptance of aggression. The committee hold that all aggression must be resisted, for any submission to it must mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection. The Congress is anxious to avoid the experience of Malaya, Singapore and Burma

and desires to build up resistance to any aggression on, or any invasion of, India by the Japanese or any foreign power. The Congress would change the present ill will against Britain into goodwill, and make India a willing partner in a joint enterprise securing freedom for the nations and peoples of the world and in the trials and tribulations which accompany it. This is only possible, if India feels the glow of freedom.

"The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose long record has been to pursue relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the ending of foreign domination and intervention can the present unreality give place to reality, and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis. But the present political parties, formed chiefly with a view to attract the attention of and influence the British power, will then probably cease to function. For the first time in India's history, the realization will come home that the princes, *jagirdars*, zamindars and propertied and monied classes, derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields, factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially power and authority must belong. On the withdrawal of British rule from India, responsible men and women of the country will come together to form a provisional government, representative of all important sections of the people of India, which will later evolve a scheme by which a constituent assembly can be convened, in order to prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. Representatives of free India and representatives of Great Britain will confer together for the adjustment of future relations and the co-operation of the two countries as allies, in the common task of meeting aggression. It is the earnest desire of the Congress to enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

"In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the allied powers in their prosecution of the war, or in anyway to encourage aggression on India, or increase the pressure on China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardize the defensive

capacity of the allied powers. The Congress is, therefore, agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the allies in India, should they so desire, in order to ward off and resist the Japanese or other aggression and to protect and help China.

"The proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, and certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. If such a withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it would result in the establishing of a stable provisional government in India, and co-operation between this Government and the United Nations in resisting aggression and helping China.

"The Congress realizes that there may be risks involved in such a course. Such risks, however, have to be faced by any country in order to achieve freedom, and, more especially at the present critical juncture, in order to save the country and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater risks and perils.

"And while, therefore, the Congress is impatient to achieve the national purpose, it wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid, in so far as is possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations. The Congress would be pleased with the British power to accept the very reasonable and just proposal herein made, not only in the interest of India, but also that of Britain and of the cause of freedom to which the United Nations proclaim their adherence.

"Should, however, this appeal fail, the Congress can't view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and the weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilize all the non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted non-violence as part of its policy for the vindication of the political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. As the issues raised are of the most vital and of far-reaching importance to the people of India, as well as to the people of the United Nations, the Working Committee refer them to the All-India Congress Committee for the final decision. For the purpose, the A.-I.C.C. will meet in Bombay on August 7, 1942."

Soon after the meeting of the Working Committee on July 14, Gandhi met various representatives of the press—the Indian and foreign—and gave them a joint interview. He made it clear that the Working Committee had worked on his own draft, and there had been a lot of give and take. He added: "Of course, if the resolution had not met with my approval, it would not have been passed. Whether it wholly meets with my approval or not, is a difficult question to answer. It is not humanly possible for a group of people to agree on every sentence and every word. There always is room for accommodation."

"Is it possible," asked a representative of the Associated Press of America, "for you to tell us the things that you might do after the All-India Congress Committee meets and adopts the Working Committee resolution?"

"Is not that question a little premature?" asked Gandhi. "Supposing the All-India Congress Committee vetoes the resolution, the whole thing wears a different aspect. But you may know that it will be a mass movement of a strictly non-violent character, and then you can fill in the details. It will include all that a mass movement can include."

"Will you court imprisonment?"

"I am not going to court imprisonment. The struggle does not involve courting imprisonment. It is too soft a thing. We had, no doubt, made it a business to court imprisonment up to now, but there will be no such thing this time. My intention is to make the thing as short and swift as possible."

"Will you resort to fasting, if sent to jail?"

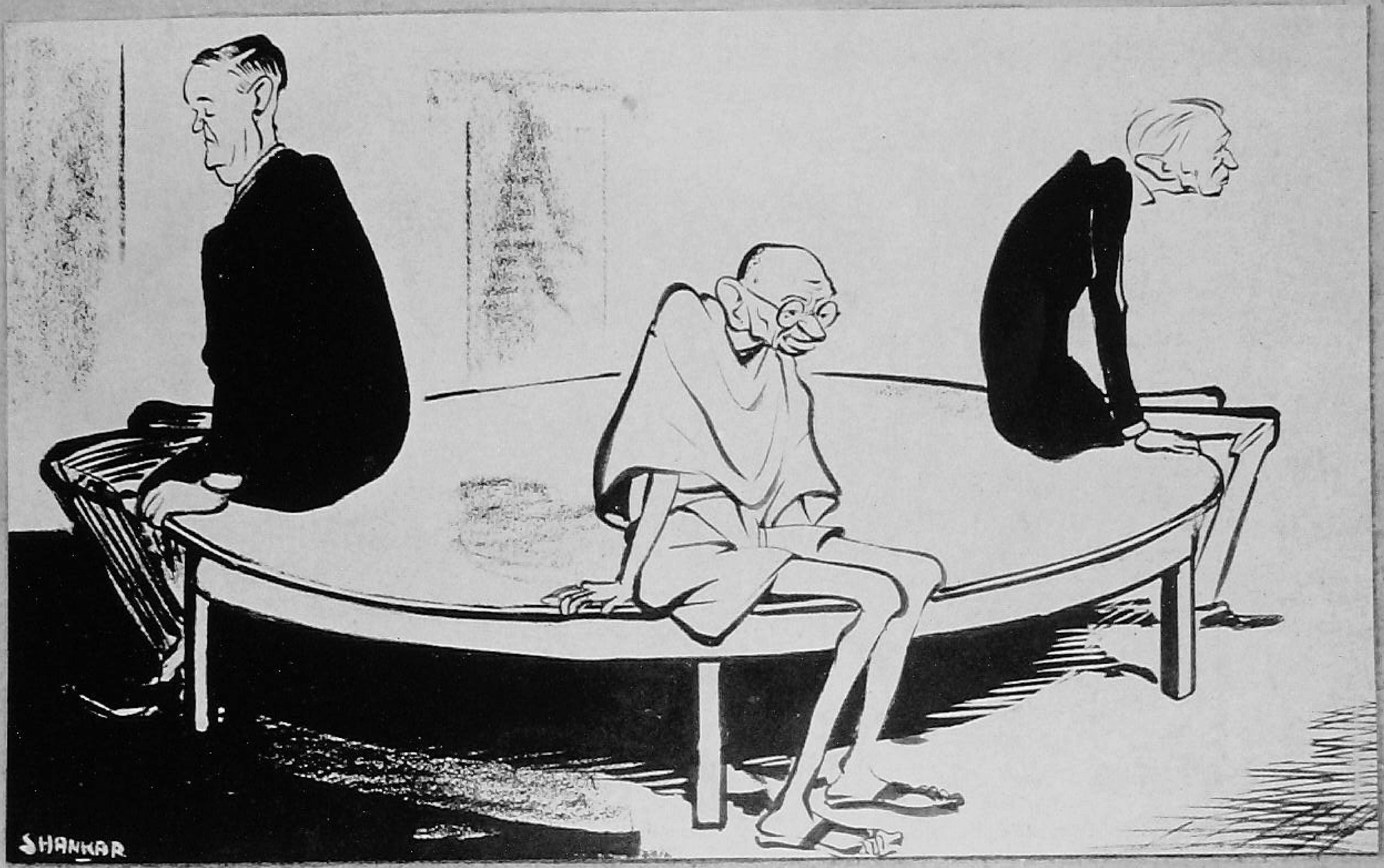
"It is not my desire this time, as I have said, to court imprisonment. But if I am dragged into jail, it is difficult to say what I may do. But I can fast, as I have fasted before now, though I should try to avoid such an extreme step, so far as possible."

"Do you hope that the negotiations may be opened by the British Government?"

"They may, but with whom they will do it, I do not know. For, it is not a question of placating one party or other. For, it is the unconditional withdrawal of the British power, without reference to the wishes of any party, that is our demand. The demand is based on its justice. Of course, it is possible that the British may negotiate a withdrawal. If they do, it will be a feather in their cap.

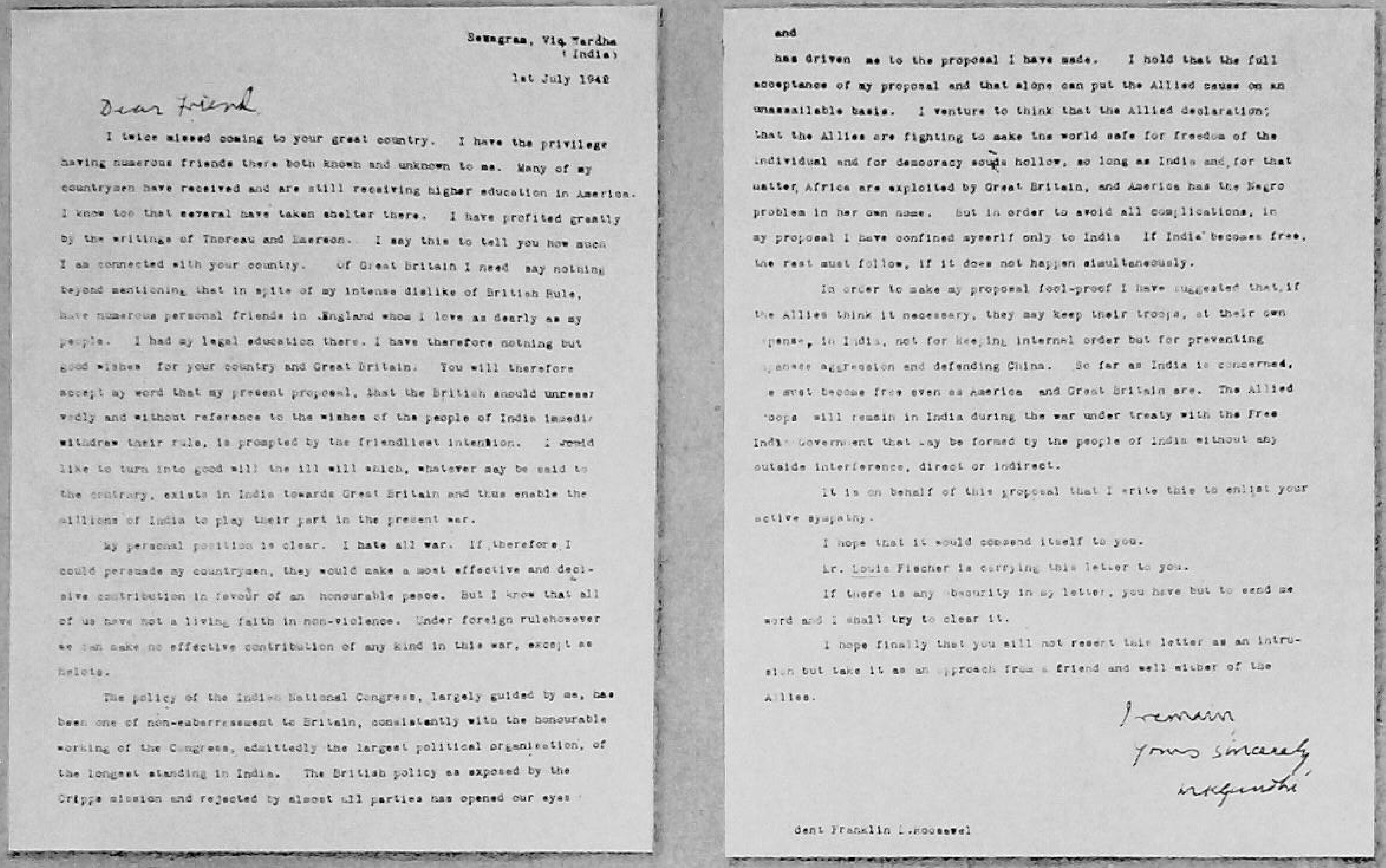
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

A cartoon on Gandhi-Linlithgow negotiations, 1942



Courtesy : Chaitanyaprasad Diwanji

A cartoon by Shankar on the political deadlock, 1942


Sevagram, Via Wardha
(India)

1st July 1942

Dear Friend

I twice missed coming to your great country. I have the privilege having numerous friends there both known and unknown to me. Many of my countrymen have received and are still receiving higher education in America. I know too that several have taken shelter there. I have profited greatly by the writings of Thoreau and Emerson. I say this to tell you how much I am connected with your country. Of Great Britain I need say nothing beyond mentioning that in spite of my intense dislike of British Rule, have numerous personal friends in England whom I love as dearly as my people. I had my legal education there. I have therefore nothing but good wishes for your country and Great Britain. You will therefore accept my word that my present proposal, that the British should unreservedly and without reference to the wishes of the people of India immedi/ withdraw their rule, is prompted by the friendliest intention. I would like to turn into good will the ill will which, whatever may be said to the contrary, exists in India towards Great Britain and thus enable the millions of India to play their part in the present war.

My personal position is clear. I hate all war. If therefore I could persuade my countrymen, they would make a most effective and decisive contribution in favour of an honourable peace. But I know that all of us have not a living faith in non-violence. Under foreign rule however we can make no effective contribution of any kind in this war, except as helots.

The policy of the Indian National Congress, largely guided by me, has been one of non-embarrassment to Britain, consistently with the honourable working of the Congress, admittedly the largest political organisation, of the longest standing in India. The British policy as exposed by the Cripps mission and rejected by almost all parties has opened our eyes and has driven me to the proposal I have made. I hold that the full acceptance of my proposal and that alone can put the Allied cause on an unassailable basis. I venture to think that the Allied declaration that the Allies are fighting to make the world safe for freedom of the individual and for democracy sounds hollow, so long as India and, for that matter, Africa are exploited by Great Britain, and America has the Negro problem in her own home. But in order to avoid all complications, in my proposal I have confined myself only to India. If India becomes free, the rest must follow, if it does not happen simultaneously.

In order to make my proposal fool-proof I have suggested that, if the Allies think it necessary, they may keep their troops, at their own expense, in India, not for keeping internal order but for preventing Japanese aggression and defending China. So far as India is concerned, we must become free even as America and Great Britain are. The Allied troops will remain in India during the war under treaty with the Free India Government that may be formed by the people of India without any outside interference, direct or indirect.

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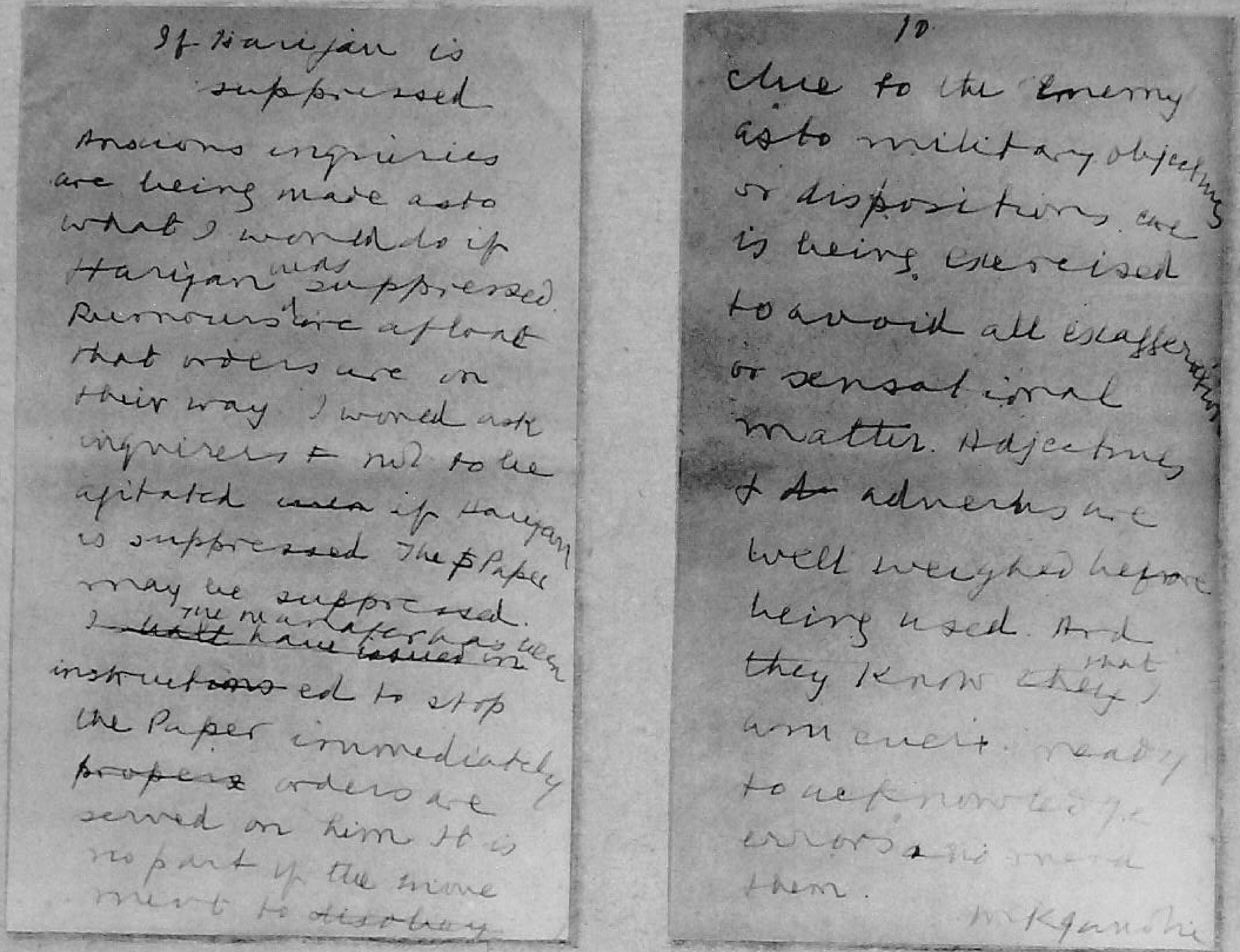
I remain
Yours sincerely
M K Gandhi

dent Franklin D. Roosevel

Courtesy : Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, New York

Gandhi's letter to President Roosevelt, dated Sevagram, July 1, 1942



If Harijan is
suppressed

Anxious inquiries
are being made as to
what I would do if
Harijan was suppressed.
Rumours are afloat
that orders are on
their way. I would ask
inquirers not to be
agitated if Harijan
is suppressed. The Paper
may be suppressed.
The manager has been
instructed to stop
the Paper immediately
orders are
served on him. It is
no part of the move-
ment to disobey

10

clue to the enemy
as to military objectives
or dispositions. Care
is being exercised
to avoid all exaggeration
or sensational
matter. Adjectives
& adverbs are
well weighed before
being used. And
they know that they
are ever ready
to acknowledge
errors and mend
them.

M. K. Gandhi

Pages of manuscript from Gandhi's article, " If *Harijan* Is Suppressed ", dated July 19, 1942

Then, it will cease to be a case for withdrawal. If the British see, however late, the wisdom of recognizing the independence of India, without reference to various parties, all things are possible. But the point I want to stress here is this that there is no room left for negotiations in the proposal for withdrawal. Either they recognize independence, or they don't. After that recognition, many things can follow. For, by that single act, the British representatives will have altered the face of the whole landscape and revived the hope of the people which has been frustrated times without number. Therefore, whenever that great act is performed on behalf of the British people, it will be a red-letter day in the history of India and the world. And as I have said, it can materially affect the fortunes of war."

"But after the recognition of free India, does it start to function at once?"

"Yes, from the very next moment. For, independence will be not on paper, but in action. Your next legitimate question would be, 'How will free India function?' And because there was that knot, I said, 'Leave India to God or anarchy.' But in practice what will happen is this: if the withdrawal takes place in perfect goodwill, the change will be effected without the slightest disturbance. People would have to come to their own without disturbance. The wise people from among the responsible sections will come together and will evolve a provisional government. Then, there will be no anarchy, no interruption, and a crowning glory."

"Can you visualize the composition of provisional government?"

"I do not need to do so. But I am clear that it will not be a party government. All parties, including the Congress, will automatically dissolve. They may function later, and, when they do, they may function complementary to one another, each looking to the other in order to grow. Then, as I have said, all unreality disappears like mist before the morning sun—we don't know how, though we witness the phenomenon every day."

"But," asked an Indian correspondent, "looking to all their past record, will the British have the sense to come to terms?"

"Why not? They are human beings and I have never discounted the possibility of human nature's upward growth, and no other nation had ever had to face a freedom movement based, not principally, but wholly on non-violence."

"But there is an apparent contradiction in your resolution. The first paragraphs recount the fact that there is no intention on the part of the British to part with power, then suddenly you postulate such a desire on their part."

"There is nothing inconsistent. The facts are narrated in order to justify the suddenness of the demand for withdrawal. The other paragraphs refer to possibilities. Many things may happen and they may be altogether creditable to the British."

"But may not your movement hamper the efforts of the allies in China?"

"No, since the movement is intended to make a common cause with the allies, it should not hamper the allied effort."

"But if there is no withdrawal, then the disturbances are bound to happen?"

"You see, ill will is already there. It will grow apace. Immediately the movement is started, ill will may be changed into goodwill if the British people respond. But even if they don't respond, when people make an effort to free themselves from a foreign yoke, ill will needs no other opening. It takes a healthy turn instead of the bad turn that it has today."

"But, only last week, Mr. Amery reminded us that nothing is going to be done?"

"I am very much afraid that we shall have the misfortune to listen to a repetition of that language in stronger terms, if possible. But it cannot change the will of a group of people who are determined to go their way."

"You desire to have India's freedom in order to help the allies. Will free India carry out total mobilization and adopt methods of total war?" asked Mr. Edgar Snow.

"That question," said Gandhi, "is legitimate, but it is beyond me. I can only say free India will make common cause with the allies. I cannot say that free India will take part in militarism, or choose to go the non-violent way. But I can say without hesitation that if I can turn India to non-violence, I will certainly do so. If I succeed in converting forty crores of people to non-violence, it will be a tremendous thing, a wonderful transformation."

"But won't you oppose a militarist effort by civil disobedience?"

"I have no such desire," replied Gandhi. "I cannot oppose free India's will with civil disobedience, it would be wrong."

The correspondent of *Daily Express*, Mr. Young, said he would be content with a couple of minutes' interview, and Gandhi acceded to his request.

"Would you say that your movement will make it more difficult or less difficult for us to keep the Japanese out of India?"

"Our movement will make it more difficult for the Japanese to come in. But, of course, if there is no co-operation from Britain and the allies, I cannot say."

"But," pleaded Mr. Young, "think of the war as a whole. Do you think that your new movement will help the allied nations towards victory, which you have said you also desire?"

"Yes, if my submission is accepted."

"What do you mean by your submission?—that Britain should offer non-violent battle?"

"No, no. My submission that British rule in India should end. If that is accepted, victory for the allied powers is assured. India will then become an independent power, and thus a real ally, while now she is only a slave. The result of my movement, if it is sympathetically responded to, is bound to be speedy victory. But if it is misunderstood by the British, and they take up the attitude that they would like to crush it, then they would be responsible for the result, not I."

Mr. Young then made an appeal to Gandhi's sentiment and said: "Mr. Gandhi, you have been in London yourself. Have you no comment to make on the heavy bombings which the British people have sustained?"

"Oh, yes. I know every nook and corner of London where I lived for three years, so many years ago, and somewhat of Oxford and of Cambridge and Manchester too; but it is London I specially feel for. I used to read in the Inner Temple Library, and would often attend Dr. Parker's sermons in the Temple Church. My heart goes out to the people, and when I heard that the Temple Church was bombed, I bled. And the bombing of the Westminster Abbey and other ancient edifices affected me deeply."

"Then, don't you think," asked Mr. Young, "it would be wiser to postpone your movement until we have settled with the Germans and the Japanese?"

"No," said Gandhi, "because I know you will not settle with the Germans without us. If we were free, we could give you cent per

cent co-operation in our own manner. It is curious that such a simple thing is not understood. Great Britain has today no contribution from a free India. Tomorrow, as soon as India is free, she gains moral strength and a powerful ally in a free nation—powerful, morally. This raises England's power to the *n*th degree. This is surely self-proved."

Three press correspondents stayed after the Working Committee meeting in order to have a leisurely interview with Gandhi. They had already been present at the general press interview, but they thought their countries would be specially interested in certain questions, and they tried to represent the mind of the average man in their respective countries. Mr. Steele represented *Chicago Daily News*, Mr. Stuart Emeny, *News Chronicle* and Mr. Richard Jen, the Central News Agency of China.

Mr. Emeny asked: "Could you give me an idea of the plans of your movement? Would it include the breach of salt law, calling out Government servants and labour?"

Gandhi said: "As I said yesterday, the programme covers every activity of a strictly non-violent character included in a mass movement. Therefore, undoubtedly, the things you have mentioned are included. But it is not my intention to undertake at once any overwhelming programme. I want to watch and see, because whatever may be said to the contrary, even in conducting the movement I want to guard against a sudden outburst of anarchy or a state of things which may be calculated to invite Japanese aggression. I believe that India's demand is fundamental. It is indispensable for her national existence, as I conceive it to be. Therefore, I shall take every precaution I can to handle the movement gently, but I would not hesitate to go to the extremest limit, if I find that no impression is produced on the British Government or the allied powers. I hold it to be legitimate to make the allied powers responsible for all that may happen in India, because it is open to them in the interests of the common cause to prevent the happening of anything that might disturb the even course of the war. I think I have sufficiently answered your very pertinent question. I am unable to give you a more detailed answer, not because I want to suppress or shirk it, but I am not ready with a planned programme as yet."

"Will it be your biggest movement?"

"Yes, my biggest movement."

"But if there is no response, what time-limit would you set before launching your campaign?"

"Assuming that the A.-I.C.C. confirms the resolution, there will be some time, but not very long, taken. As far as I can see just now, it may be a week or two."

"But will you give time?"

"Of course," said Gandhi, "as I have always done before launching on every struggle."

"If the Viceroy asks you to go to New Delhi, will you accept his invitation?"

"Oh, yes. And, then, you forget that the Viceroy and I have become personal friends, if a public man and a Viceroy may be so called."

"Will your campaign collapse, if the Government sent you and thousands of your followers to jail?"

"I hope not," said Gandhi laughing heartily. "On the contrary, it should gain strength if it has any vitality."

Now Mr. Emeny pleaded: "With the enemy at the gates, what is your objection to calling a truce?"

"This struggle has been conceived," asserted Gandhi, "in order to avert a catastrophe. At the critical moment, an un-free India is likely to become a hindrance rather than a help. The Congress resolution itself hints at the possibility of a large number of Indians going over to the Japanese side—if they effected a landing on the Indian shores—as we now know happened in Burma, Malaya and, for aught I know, in Singapore too. I am of the opinion that this might have been prevented at least so far as Burma is concerned, if she had been made independent. But it was not done. We know the result. We are determined, so far as it is humanly possible, to secure our independence, so that no Indian worth the name would then think of going over to the Japanese side. It would then, become as much India's interest, as the allies' interest, to resist the Japanese aggression with all her might."

"But with time so short, don't you think you have a moral duty to stand beside the Russians and the Chinese?"

Gandhi retorted: "Don't you see if it was a purely personal question, what you say would have been perfectly possible. But even with the combined influence of every member of the Congress Working Committee, it would have been impossible to enthuse

the masses in favour of the allied cause, which they don't understand, cannot understand."

"But," emphasized Mr. Emeny, "I have the feeling myself that you could, if you would, with your tremendous authority with the masses, do anything. They are sure to listen to you."

Gandhi said: "You credit me with an influence which I wish I had, but I assure you I do not possess. And, in proof of this, I shall give you two solid facts. If I had that influence, you will agree that we would already have won our independence without causing any trouble to anybody. But as you know, I have no influence, nor has the Working Committee, with the Muslim League and the princes. That is one solid fact. Then, there is another thing. During the last war, as you perhaps know, I had thrown myself heart and soul into it. I had become a voluntary recruiting agent for the British. And I began my agency in the district in which I had just been leading a campaign for agricultural relief with fair success. I should have made great headway there. But I tell you I did not do so. I used to walk miles in the hot burning sun in order to collect the recruits and to make an impression on the people about the urgency of it. But I could not. You will see, therefore, that my influence, great as it may appear to the outsiders, is strictly limited. I may have considerable influence to conduct a campaign for redress of popular grievances because people are ready and need a helper. But I have no influence to direct people's energy in a channel in which they have no interest."

"Then, what part of the people, you think, will believe in your movement?" asked Mr. Steele.

"I wish I could tell you definitely. It is all problematical. I simply trade on the absolute purity of the cause and the equal purity of the means which are non-violent."

"Are you not apprehensive, that the Working Committee's resolution will antagonize American opinion?"

"Of course, it may. But I have never embarked upon any campaign in the belief that I would have world sympathy at my back. On the contrary, the odds, almost in every case, have been against me. In the very first satyagraha struggle which started in South Africa, every outward element was hostile to me. I had stated then, though I had no experience of the working of satyagraha that I have now, that a handful though we were in the midst of millions

who had no sympathy for us, we had to rely upon our own inner strength and the absolute justice of our cause. And that sustained us through the long-drawn-out agony lasting eight years. I do not know why I should lose the sympathy of the American people, or the British people, for that matter. And why should they fight shy of a just demand for absolute freedom?"

"Speaking as an American," said Mr. Steele, "I can say that the reaction of many Americans would be that a movement for freedom may be unwise at this moment, for it would lead to complications in India which may be prejudicial to the efficient prosecution of the war."

"This belief is born of ignorance," observed Gandhi. "What possible internal complication can take place if the British Government declare today that India is absolutely independent? It would be, in my opinion, the least risk the allies could take on behalf of the war effort. I am open to conviction. If anybody could convince me that in the midst of war, the British Government cannot declare India free without jeopardizing the war effort, I should like to hear the argument. I have not as yet heard any cogent one."

"If you were convinced, would you call off the campaign?"

"Of course. My complaint is that all these good critics talk at me, swear at me, but never condescend to talk to me."

The Chinese correspondent now took his turn: "You have implicit faith in non-violence. But we have seen that armed resistance alone can succeed against the Japanese."

"China never tried any experiment in non-violence," Gandhi retorted. "That the Chinese remained passive for some time is no proof that it was a non-violent attitude. For the first time in history non-violence instead of being confined to individuals, religious enthusiasts and mystics, has been brought down to the political field and has been experimented on by vast masses of mankind. Just imagine, that instead of a few Indians or even a million or so, all four hundred million Indians were non-violent, would Japan make any headway in India, unless they were intent upon exterminating all the four hundred million?"

"If India were made of four hundred million Gandhis," interrupted Mr. Steele.

"Here we come to brass tacks," he said. "That means India is not sufficiently non-violent. If we had been, there would have

been no parties, and there would be no Japanese attack. I know non-violence is limited in both numbers and quality, but deficient as it is in both these respects, it has made a great impression and infused life into the people which was absent before. The awakening that showed itself on April 6, 1919, was a matter of surprise to every Indian. I cannot today account for the response we then had from every nook and corner of the country, where no public worker had ever been. We had not then gone among the masses, we did not know we could go and speak to them."

"What can free India do for China?" asked Mr. Jen.

"If India were to listen to me, she would give non-violent help to China. But I know that will not be. Free India would want to be militarist. She will, then, get all the materials and men she needs, although it appears that China with her vast population will not need men. Today unfree India can't send a single person to China. I go further—free India can even plead with Japan, and Japan will have to listen."

"Can you give me an idea who would take the lead in forming a provisional government—you, Congress, or the Muslim League?"

"The Muslim League certainly can; the Congress can. If everything went right, it would be a combined leadership. No one party would take the lead."

"Would it be within the present constitutional structure?" asked the correspondents.

"The constitution will be dead," he stated. "The Government of India Act of 1935 is dead. The I.C.S. would have to go and it might be anarchy, but there need be no anarchy, if the British withdraw with goodwill. Free India Government would set up a constitution suited to Indian genius, evolved without dictation from outside. But whether India would be cut up into autonomous provinces or not, I don't know. The permanent structure may take time—all the time the war may require. But the provisional government may continue to function. It may be somewhat after the pattern of the present government, but with great modifications. The two communities will work certainly in hearty combination. It would be a combination not superimposed, but brought about by internal effort. The dictating factor will not be an outside one, but wisdom. And, I believe, there will be abundant wisdom among us."

"Would the Viceroy cease to exist as such?"

"We shall be friends even then, but on a par, and I have no doubt that Lord Linlithgow will welcome the day when he will be one of the people."

"Why cannot all this be done today, without the British withdrawal?" asked Mr. Emeny returning to the charge.

"The answer is simple. Why can't a prisoner do a thing which a free man can do? You may not have been behind the prison bars, but I have been and I know. Imprisonment means civil death, and I suggest to you that the whole of India is civilly dead. The very breath is controlled by British power. Then, there is another experience that you lack. You have not been a member of a nation that has been under subjection for several centuries. Our habit has been that we can never be free. You know the case of Subhas Bose, a man of great self-sacrifice, who might have had a distinguished career in the Indian Civil Service, but who is now an exile because he cannot possibly tolerate this helpless condition and feels that he must seek the help of Germany and Japan."

"You have said there is no more room for negotiation. Does it mean that you would ignore a conciliatory gesture, if it was made?" was the final question put on behalf of all the three.

"So far as we are concerned, we have closed our hearts. As we have said in our resolution, all hopes have been dashed to pieces. The burden is shifted. But it is open to America, Britain, China and even Russia to plead for India which is pining for freedom. And if an acceptable proposal is made, it would certainly be open to the Congress or any other party to entertain and accept it. It would be churlish on our part if we said, 'We don't want to talk to anybody and we will by our own strong hearts expel the British.' Then, the Congress committee won't be meeting; there would be no resolutions; and I should not be seeing press representatives."

"What is the difference between Nero and yourself?" a correspondent asked. "Nero was fiddling when Rome was burning. Will you be also fiddling in Sevagram after you have ignited the fire which you will not be able to quench?" Gandhi replied:

"The difference will be known if match, if I have ever to light it, does not prove a 'damp squib'. Instead of fiddling in Sevagram you may expect to find me perishing in the flames of my own starting if I cannot regulate or restrain them. But I have a grouse against you. Why should you shove all the blame on to me for all that

may happen by reason of my taking action for the discharge of an overdue debt and that, too, just when the discharge has become the necessary condition of my life?

"In their schools the rulers teach us to sing 'Britons never shall be slaves.' How can the refrain enthuse their slaves? The British are pouring blood like water and squandering gold like dust, in order to preserve their liberty. Or, is it their right to enslave India and Africa? Why should Indians do less to free themselves from bondage? It is misuse of language to liken to the action of Nero that of a man who, in order to escape living death, lights his own funeral pyre to end the agony."

In reply to several pungent critics, Gandhi wrote:

"The critics who impute motives to the Working Committee or to me harm the cause they profess to serve. The members of the Working Committee are all seasoned servants of the nation with full sense of their responsibility. It is no use damning me as a dictator like Hitler. He does not argue with his co-workers, if he may be said to have any. He merely issues orders which can only be disobeyed on pain of death or worse. I argue with my friends for days. I argued at the last meeting for eight days. The members agreed when their reason was satisfied. My sanction with my friends, as well as self-styled enemies, has ever been reason and love. It is a travesty of truth, therefore, to compare me with Hitler or to call me dictator in any current sense of the term.

"It is an equal travesty of truth to abuse the Congress by calling it a Hindu or a communal organization. It is national in the fullest sense of the term. It is a purely political organization. It is mischievous and misleading to discredit this organization in America and Great Britain as a communal or pro-Axis or a purely Hindu organization. If it was a pro-Axis organization, it has courage and influence enough to make a public declaration to that effect in disregard of the consequences that might overtake it.

"It is not, and has never been, a secret or a violent organization. If it had been either, it would have been suppressed long ago. So much about some manifest misrepresentations.

"Now about suppression of relevant Congress position. Nobody has contended that the demand for withdrawal of British power is not an inherent right of the nation, irrespective of the demand to the contrary by those who by centuries of habit have lost the sense

of freedom. It is said that it is wrong not intrinsically, but because of the Congress declaration of non-embarrassment to ask for such withdrawal at this moment.

"Critics conveniently omit to mention the fact that in order to prove its bona fides and to prevent the Japanese attack, the Congress has agreed that, in spite of the withdrawal of the British, the allied troops should remain in India, naturally under a treaty with the free government to be. So long as that government, provisional or otherwise, has not come into being, there will be no authority to check their operations save their honour. For by declaring India free, they will have absolved themselves from consulting anybody formally as they have to consult today members of their nomination. In this sense, the declaration of independence leaves them freer to adopt the military measures they may consider necessary.

"I know that this is an anomalous position for a free country to be in. But honesty dictates that course. As I have said and repeat here, the Congress demand is foolproof. Critics who are anxious to serve the allies would do well to examine the Congress position and point out flaws, if there are any. Let me inform them that those who have come to me to understand my demand, and who had serious misgivings, went away convinced that it was wholly just, and that, if justice was not done, the Congress would be right in taking action to vindicate its position."

Fire Raging In Me

1942

"You are going strong," wrote a correspondent. Rumours were afloat that *Harijan* might be banned any moment. "*Harijan* may be suppressed, its message cannot be, so long as I live," Gandhi observed on July 19, 1942. He wrote:

"Anxious inquiries are being made as to what I would do, if *Harijan* was suppressed. Rumours are afloat that the orders are on their way. I would ask the inquirers not to be agitated if *Harijan* is suppressed. The paper may be suppressed. The manager has been instructed to stop it immediately orders are served on him. It is no part of the movement to publish *Harijan* in defiance of orders. But *Harijan* may be suppressed, its message cannot be, so long as I live. Indeed, the spirit will survive the dissolution of the body and somehow speak through the millions. For, with due apologies to Veer Savarkar and Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, I claim to represent the joint spirit of millions of Hindus and Musalmans, and other non-Hindus who call themselves children of Hindustan. I am living, and hope to have the strength to die, for the freedom of every inhabitant of this land.

"Let us see what *Harijan* is today. It is being published in English, Hindi, Urdu (two places), Tamil, Telugu (two places), Ooriya, Marathi, Gujarati, Kanarese (two places). It is ready to be published in Bengali, only awaiting legal permission. Applications have come from Assam, Kerala and Sind. All but one edition have a large circulation compared to the other weeklies. I suggest that it is no small matter to suppress such a paper. The loss will be more Government's than the people's. They will incur much ill will by suppressing a popular paper.

"Let it be known too that *Harijan* is a views-paper as distinguished from a newspaper. The people buy and read it not for amusement, but instruction and regulating their daily conduct. They literally take

their weekly lessons in non-violence. It cannot pay the authorities to deprive the people of their weekly food.

"And *Harijan* is not an anti-British paper. It is pro-British from head to foot. It wishes well to the British people. It tells them in the friendliest manner where in its opinion they err.

"The Anglo-Indian papers, I know, are Government favourites. They represent a dying imperialism. Whether Britain wins or loses imperialism has to die. It is certainly of no use now to the British people whatever it may have been in the past. In that sense, therefore, Anglo-Indian papers are really anti-British as *Harijan* is pro-British. They are disseminating hatred day by day by hiding the reality and bolstering imperialism which is ruining Britain. It is in order to arrest the progress of that ruin that, frail as I am, I have put my whole soul into a movement which, if it is designed to free India from the imperial yoke, is equally intended to contribute the mightiest war effort in their behalf. If they suppress *Harijan*, let them know what they will seek to suppress.

"Let me add too that without needing any pressure from outside, I am using the greatest restraint in the choice of printing matter. Nothing is being consciously published that would give any clue to the 'enemy' as to military objectives or dispositions. Care is being exercised to avoid all exaggeration or sensational matter. Adjectives and adverbs are well weighed before being used. And they know that I am ever ready to acknowledge errors and mend them."

In the next issue of *Harijan*, Gandhi made a fervent appeal "To Every Japanese":

"I must confess at the outset that though I have no ill will against you, I intensely dislike your attack upon China. From your lofty height, you have descended to imperial ambition. You will fail to realize that ambition and may become the authors of the dismemberment of Asia, thus unwittingly preventing world federation and brotherhood without which there can be no hope for humanity.

"Ever since I was a lad of eighteen, studying in London, over fifty years ago, I learnt, through the writings of the late Sir Edwin Arnold, to prize the many excellent qualities of your nation. I was thrilled when in South Africa I learnt of your brilliant victory over Russian arms. After my return to India from South Africa in 1915, I came in close touch with Japanese monks who lived as members of our ashram from time to time. One of them became a valuable

member of the ashram in Sevagram, and his application to duty, his dignified bearing, his unfailing devotion to daily worship, affability, unruffledness under varying circumstances, and his natural smile, which was positive evidence of his inner peace, had endeared him to all of us. And now that, owing to your declaration of war against Great Britain, he has been taken away from us, we miss him as a dear co-worker. He has left behind him as a memory his daily prayer and his little drum, to the accompaniment of which we open our morning and evening prayers.

"In the background of the pleasant recollections, I grieve deeply as I contemplate what appears to me to be your unprovoked attack against China and, if reports are to be believed, your merciless devastation of that great and ancient land.

"It was a worthy ambition of yours to take equal rank with the great powers of the world. Your aggression against China and your alliance with the Axis powers was surely an unwarranted excess of that ambition.

"I should have thought that you would be proud of the fact that that great and ancient people, whose old classical literature you have adopted as your own, are your neighbours. Your understanding of one another's history, tradition, literature should bind you as friends, rather than make you the enemies you are today.

"If I was a free man, and if you allowed me to come to your country, frail though I am, I would not mind risking my health, may be my life, to come to your country to plead with you to desist from the wrong you are doing to China and world and, therefore, to yourself.

"But I enjoy no such freedom. And we are in the unique position of having to resist an imperialism that we detest no less than yours and Nazism. Our resistance to it does not mean harm to the British people. We seek to convert them. Ours is an unarmed revolt against British rule. An important party in the country is engaged in a deadly but friendly quarrel with the foreign rulers.

"But in this, they need no aid from the foreign powers. You have been gravely misinformed, as I know you are, that we have chosen this particular moment to embarrass the allies when your attack against India is imminent. If we wanted to turn Britain's difficulty into our opportunity, we should have done it as soon as the war broke out nearly three years ago.

"Our movement demanding the withdrawal of British power from India should in no way be misunderstood. In fact, if we are to believe your reported anxiety for the independence of India, a recognition of that independence by Britain, should leave you no excuse for any attack on India. Moreover, the reported profession sorts ill with your ruthless aggression against China.

"I would ask you to make no mistake about the fact that you will be sadly disillusioned, if you believe that you will receive a willing welcome from India. The end and aim of the movement for British withdrawal is to prepare India, by making her free for resisting all militarist and imperialist ambition, whether it is called the British imperialism, German Nazism, or your pattern. If we do not, we shall have been ignoble spectators of the militarization of the world in spite of our belief that in non-violence we have the only solvent of the militarist spirit and ambition. Personally, I fear that without declaring the independence of India, the allied powers will not be able to beat the Axis combination which has raised violence to the dignity of a religion. The allies cannot beat you and your partners unless they beat you in your ruthless and skilled warfare. If they copy it, their declaration that they will save the world for democracy and individual freedom must come to naught. I feel that they can only gain strength to avoid copying your ruthlessness by declaring and recognizing now the freedom of India, and turning sullen India's forced co-operation into freed India's voluntary co-operation.

"To Britain and to the allies we have appealed in the name of justice, in proof of their professions, and in their own self-interest. To you I appeal in the name of humanity. It is a marvel to me that you do not see that ruthless warfare is nobody's monopoly. If not the allies, some other power will certainly improve upon your method and beat you with your own weapon. Even if you win, you will leave no legacy to your people of which they would feel proud. They cannot take pride in a recital of cruel deeds, however skilfully achieved.

"Even if you win, it will not prove that you were in the right, it will only prove that your power of destruction was greater. This applies obviously to the allies too, unless they perform now the just and the righteous act of freeing India as an earnest and promise of similarly freeing all other subject peoples in Asia and Africa.

"Our appeal to Britain is coupled with the offer of free India's willingness to let the allies retain their troops in India. The offer is made in order to prove that we do not in any way mean to harm the allied cause, and in order to prevent you from being misled into feeling that you have but to step into the country that Britain has vacated. Needless to repeat that if you cherish any such idea and will carry it out, we will not fail in resisting you with all the might that our country can muster. I address this appeal to you in the hope that our movement may even influence you and your partners in the right direction and deflect you and them from the course which is bound to end in your moral ruin and the reduction of human beings to robots.

"The hope of your response to my appeal is much fainter than that of response from Britain. I know that the British are not devoid of a sense of justice and they know me. I do not know you enough to be able to judge. All I have read tells me that you listen to no appeal but to the sword. How I wish that you are cruelly misrepresented and that I shall touch the right chord in your heart! Anyway, I have an undying faith in the responsiveness of human nature. On the strength of that faith I have conceived the impending movement in India, and it is that faith which has prompted this appeal to you."

A journalist, who visited Sevagram, talked of the public feeling in his province. "It is more anti-British than pro-Japanese," he said. "There is a vague notion that we have had enough of this rule, and almost anything would be better than the existing state of things. People are happy when Subhas Babu says on the radio that there are no differences between him and you and when he says you are now out to fight for liberty at any cost."

"But I suppose you know that there he is wrong," said Gandhi, "and I cannot possibly appropriate the compliments he is paying me. 'Liberty at any cost' has a vastly different connotation for me from what it has for him. 'At any cost' does not exist in my dictionary. It does not, for instance, include bringing in foreigners to help us win our liberty. I have no doubt it means exchanging one form of slavery for another, possibly much worse. But, of course, we have to fight for our own liberty and make whatever sacrifice it demands. In spite of all the hypocrisy that you find in all the inspired press of Britain and America, I do not relent. I deliberately

use the word hypocrisy, for they are now proving that when they were talking of the freedom of India, they did not mean it. So far as I am concerned, I have no doubt about the righteousness of my step. It seems to me to be axiomatic that the allies are in for a defeat this time, if they will not do this initial act of justice, and thus put their own case on an unassailable basis. If they do not, they must face the opposition of those who cannot tolerate their rule and are prepared to die in order to get rid of it. Convert the deepening ill will into goodwill is a sound proposition. It is not open to them to say that we must smother our consciences and say or do nothing because there is war. That is why I have made up my mind that it would be a good thing, if a million people were shot in a brave and non-violent rebellion against the British rule. It may be that it may take us years before we can evolve order out of chaos. But we can then face the world, we cannot face the world today. Avowedly the different nations are fighting for their liberty. Germany, Japan, Russia and China are pouring their blood and money like water. What is our record? You talk of the newspapers doing good business out of the war. It is a shame to be thus bought and to refrain from speaking out at the Government's dictation. There is many a way of earning an honest crust of bread. If the British money—which is our own money—can buy us, Heaven help our country."

"I do not feel flattered," Gandhi said, "when Subhas Babu says I am right. I am not right in the sense he means. For, there he is attributing pro-Japanese feeling to me. If I were to discover that by some strange miscalculation I had not realized the fact that I was helping the entry of the Japanese in this country, I should not hesitate to retrace my steps. As regards the Japanese, I am certain that we should lay down our lives, in order to resist them as we would resist the British.

"But it will not be the work of human hands. It will be the work of a force, incalculable and invisible, which works often upsetting all our calculations. I rely implicitly on it. Otherwise, I should go mad in the face of all this torrent of what I must call irritating criticism. They do not know my agony. I cannot express it except perhaps by dying."

"Destruction of the British power," he said, "is not dependent on Japanese or German arms. If it depended on them, there would

be nothing to be proud of, apart from the blight that would settle upon the world. But what matters to me is that I cannot be happy or proud, if some one comes in and drives away my enemy. Where do I come in there? I cannot possibly enthuse over such a thing. I want to have the pleasure of having offered up my sacrifice for fighting the enemy in my own house. If I have not that strength I cannot prevent the other from coming in. Only I must find a middle path to prevent the new enemy coming in. I am sure God will help me to find the way.

"I do not mind honest, strong, healthy criticism. All the manufactured criticism that I find being made today is sheer tomfoolery, meant to overawe me and demoralize the Congress ranks. It is a foul game. They don't know the fire that is raging in my breast. I have no false notions of prestige, no personal considerations would make me take a step that I know is sure to plunge the country into a conflagration."

Recent resolution of the Working Committee passed at Wardha was being greeted with a chorus of alarm and abuse. This was an attempt, said Jinnah, "to coerce the British Government to surrender to a Congress raj." He described the "Quit India" campaign as "a manifestation of an angered and desperate mentality", and asked if this was the best contribution that Gandhi could make to India in the evening of his life. Towards the end of July, Jinnah declared his intention of summoning the working committee of the League to discuss the "most dangerous and serious situation" created by Gandhi's challenge to the British Government and to the Muslim India. Savarkar and other Mahasabha leaders, called on their followers to give no active support to the Congress policy. The Liberal leaders headed by Sapru and Sastri appealed for the abandonment of civil disobedience as "it will be prejudicial to the best interests of the country in respect of defence and other matters." "We Indian Communists," said Mr. P. C. Joshi, general secretary of the Indian Communist Party, "are trying to convince our fellow patriots that the course of action suggested by Congress leadership does not lead to freedom, but cuts the nation away from freedom's battle and divides progressive forces in Britain and India." The resolution, said Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, "aims to put it mildly, at creating pandemonium." It was "gross betrayal of our country" and of the Indian soldiers fighting to preserve its freedom. "The

withdrawal of the movement", said Rajagopalachari in a letter of protest to Gandhi, "without simultaneous replacement by another must involve the dissolution of the state and of the society itself. The first need was the Hindu-Muslim agreement as to a national government to take over the power. Without that, the proposed campaign would only benefit the Japanese."

Meantime, the Government held their hand. As they afterwards declared that they were hoping that when the Wardha resolution came up for confirmation on August 7, the ultimatum at the end of it might after all be withdrawn "in view of its universal condemnation not only by the non-Congress Indians but also in the British and American press". When the day of decision drew near, Mr. Amery warned the Congress leaders that there would be no compromise with rebellion. British Labour Party leaders said that the very contemplation of such a movement is "proof of political irresponsibility". Broadcasting to the Americans on July 27, Sir Stafford Cripps made a direct attack on Gandhi:

"Mr. Gandhi has demanded that we should walk out of India, leaving the country with its deep-rooted religious division, without any constitutional form of government and with no organized administration. No responsible government could take such a step—least of all in the midst of war.

"The Muslims, of whom there are at least some eighty million, are deeply opposed to Hindu domination, as are also tens of millions of Depressed Classes. To have agreed to the Congress party's or to Mr. Gandhi's demands would have meant inevitable chaos and disorder. This is not merely my assertion, it is stated by Mr. Gandhi himself.

"Quite recently he said, 'Anarchy is the only way.' India is now an essential part of the world front against the Axis powers. There are British, American and Chinese forces, as well as Indians fighting side by side to defend India against Japan and if the obligations of the British Government to their American and Chinese allies are to be observed, we must ensure that India remains a safe base in and from which to operate against the Japanese enemy, and we cannot allow conditions to be created by any political party or any leader in India which will jeopardize the safety of the United Nations' armies and air forces, or help the advance of our enemies to this new dangerous theatre of war.

"This is an obligation not only to the British and the American forces in India, it is an obligation to the Indian peoples themselves. That is why your country and our country find themselves both intimately concerned with the condition of India at this moment.

"Your sons, as well as, our sons are helping to defend India and to wage war against the Japanese. Your policy, as well as, our policy is to defend India, but Mr. Gandhi and the Congress party have other views.

"Mr. Gandhi I have always regarded with respect as a great nationalist and religious leader, but I am bound to say that, in the present circumstances, he is not showing himself to be practical and realistic. Certainly, the action which he is now threatening—mass civil disobedience by his followers—is calculated to endanger both your war effort and our own and bring the greatest aid and comfort to our common enemies. Mr. Gandhi's views are not always easily defined or always consistent, but let me read a few of his recent statements:

"'We do not want these allied troops for our defence or protection. If luck favours us, the Japanese may see no reason to hold the country after the allies have withdrawn.' China, perhaps, would hardly appreciate this. And again Mr. Gandhi said: 'American aid amounts in the end to American influence, if not American rule added to the British. If the British left India to her fate, probably the Japanese would leave India alone.' These are solemn words and what do all of them amount to?

"He is not prepared to wait. He would rather jeopardize freedom and the whole cause of the United Nations. He threatens the extremes of pressure in this most difficult hour to win political power for his party. There is not the slightest doubt that other large and powerful political parties are opposed to Mr. Gandhi's demands.

"I regret profoundly that he has taken this attitude and I know that the Indian people as a whole do not support it.

"He may gain a measure of support for mass disobedience, but for the sake of India as well as for the cause of the United Nations it will be our duty to insist on keeping India as a safe and orderly base for our joint operations against the Japanese. Whatever steps are necessary to that end, we must take fearlessly.

"Once victory is gained, India has been offered complete freedom to provide in whatever way she chooses for her self-government.

But that victory must first be gained. We cannot allow the actions of a visionary—however distinguished in his fight for freedom in the past—to thwart the United Nations' drive for victory in the East. The issues are too grave for the whole world. The American, Chinese, Indian and British soldiers must not be sacrificed in their gallant struggle for the liberty of the world by any political party manoeuvring in India or in any other country. It is the interests of India that are at stake, as well as that of China, Britain and the United States. I am sure that we in this country can rely on you to give us your support in doing whatever is necessary to maintain intact the front of the United Nations in India and to reopen the lifeline of our gallant allies, the Chinese."

Gandhi pleaded for reason in *Harijan* dated August 2:

"The chorus of indignation from Great Britain and America with which the Congress Working Committee resolution on the contemplated mass action has been greeted and the veiled or open threats which it has hurled at the Congress will not deter the Congress from its purpose. Hitherto, the Congress has thriven on opposition and attempts at suppression. It will not be otherwise this time. The suppression, of which perhaps the hysterical outburst in America and Great Britain is a precursor, may cow down the people for the moment, but it will never put out the light of revolt, once it has been lighted.

"*The Daily Herald* and the Labour Party have excelled all other critics in exaggeration and abuse. How nice it would have been if they had taken the trouble to understand the Congress demand.

"The justice of the demand for the ending of British power has never been questioned, the moment chosen for enforcing it is the target of attack. It is clear as crystal in the Working Committee resolution, why this moment is chosen. Let me paraphrase it. India is not playing any effective part in the war. Some of us feel ashamed that it is so and, what is more, we feel that if we were free from the foreign yoke, we should play a worthy, nay, a decisive part in the World War which has yet to reach its climax. We know that if India does not become free now, the hidden discontent will burst forth into a welcome to the Japanese, should they effect a landing. We feel that such an event would be a calamity of the first magnitude. We can avoid it, if India gains her freedom. To distrust this simple, natural and honest declaration is to court disaster.

"But the critics say: 'To whom are the British rulers to hand the keys on their withdrawal?' It is a good question. Here is what Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President, has said: 'The Congress always stands, first, for sympathy towards the democratic countries, secondly, never desires to embarrass Britain and the war efforts, and thirdly, it stands for opposition to the Japanese aggression. The Congress does not desire to take power for itself but for all. If real power is handed over to the Congress, surely it will approach other parties and will persuade them to join.' The Congress President added that he 'had no objection to Britain handing over power to the Muslim League or any other party provided it was real independence. That party will have to approach other parties as no single party can function properly without the co-operation of other parties.'

"The only thing needful is to hand over complete control without reservation, save that during the war period the allied troops will operate to stem the Japanese or Axis attack. But, they will have no power of interference with the affairs of India which will be as free as Great Britain herself.

"Surely, there is nothing here to cavil at for anyone. That party or a combination which takes over control of India will have to look to the remaining parties for its retention of power. There is no hope of the parties coming together, so long as they have to look not to one another but to an outsider for support and sustenance. Not one of the Viceroy's numerous Indian councillors is dependent upon anybody but the Viceroy for the positions they hold. How can the great or the small representative parties operate without mutual support?

"In a free India, even the Congress could not function efficiently for a day without the support of the smallest party. For, in a free India, at least for some time to come, even the strongest party will have no military backing. There will be no military to back. There will only be a raw police in the first stage, unless the existing police will service the national government on its terms. But the support, such as it may be, that free India will be able to render to the allied cause, will be of a sterling character. Its possibilities will be limitless and there will be no motive left for welcoming Japanese arms.

"On the contrary, they will then look to the allied arms to repel any Japanese or other attack, unless all Indians by then become

non-violent. In any case, the allied arms are there today and to-morrow and till the end of the war, whether they are needed for India's protection or not.

"If this presentation of the implications of Congress demand is not appreciated by the allies' press or the allies themselves, Indian public men should be forgiven if they doubt the sincerity of the fierce opposition which is being organized with ominous unanimity. The latter can only stiffen India's suspicion and resistance."

In the same issue of *Harijan*, Gandhi made a strong appeal to the Indian princes:

"A kind of nervousness creeps over me as I think of the princes of India, although I have the privilege of knowing many and some even intimately. My nervousness arises from the painful knowledge that they are the creation of the British rulers. Though some of them pre-existed before the British advent, their existence thereafter depended solely on British goodwill, which in its turn depended up-on the price the then incumbents paid for that commodity. The present incumbents are the sole creation of the imperial power. Its simple frown can undo them.

"But the princes need not feel so helpless, if they could consider themselves as an integral part of the nation instead of being, as they are, an integral part of the imperial machine. If the machine topples, they may disappear unless they become part of and depend upon the nation.

"The empire is going either by the will of the British people or by the force of circumstances beyond their control. India shall not always be a slave country. Will the princes march with the time or must they remain tied to the imperial chariot wheel? If they take their courage in both their hands and make common cause with the nation, they can run the risk of dispossession.

"This I admit is a heroic step. They can adopt a middle course. They may earn the goodwill of their people by sharing their powers with them. They will never be able to retain their absolutism for all time. But they may certainly hope to retain much, if they secure the contentment and active co-operation of the people within their jurisdiction, in the administration of their own affairs. I think it is wrong of the princes to let their critics say of their people that they are too backward to deserve freedom. This is a reflection on them. The people in the states belong to the same stock, as those outside

their borders. The princes can lose nothing by being liberal. And they can lose everything by holding on to their autocracy.

"For my part, I desire not abolition but conversion of their autocracy into trusteeship, not in name but in reality. The arbitrary powers they enjoy should go. The liberty of the people should not depend upon the will of an individual, however noble and ancient may be his descent. Nor can any person, whether prince or princely zamindar or merchant, be the sole owner and disposer of the possessions, hereditary or self-acquired. Every individual must have the fullest liberty to use his talents consistently with equal use by his neighbours, but no one is entitled to the arbitrary use of the gains from the talents. He is part of the nation or say the social structure surrounding him. Therefore, he can only use his talent not for self only, but for the social structure of which he is but a part and on whose sufferance he lives. The present inequalities are surely due to people's ignorance. With a growing knowledge of their natural strength, inequalities must disappear. If the revolution is brought about by violence, the position will be reversed but not altered for the better. With non-violence, that is, conversion, the new era, which people hope for, must be born. My approach and appeal are in terms of non-violence, pure and undefiled. The French have a noble motto in 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.' It is a heritage not for the French only but for all mankind.

"What the French never realized, it is open to us to do. Will the princes and princely landholders and merchants take the lead? It is for them to take the lead, not for the 'have-nots', who have nothing to share with anybody except their pauperism and abjectness. I am addressing weekly appeals to the British power. They are made exactly in the same friendly spirit, as this is. The British may not respond. If the 'haves', who are in fact the pillars on which the mighty British power rests, can realize their obvious duty, the British power must yield. It was because I had despaired of response from the pillars, that I have thought of moving the masses on whom the pillars rest. I may not leave a single stone unturned to avoid, if I can, what is undoubtedly a great risk. Hence this appeal."

On August 3, on the way to Bombay, Gandhi wrote an appeal "To American Friends":

"As I am supposed to be the spirit behind the much discussed and equally well abused resolution of the Working Committee of the

Indian National Congress on independence, it has become necessary for me to explain my position. For, I am not unknown to you. I have in America perhaps the largest number of friends in the West, not even excepting Britain. British friends knowing me personally are more discerning than the American. In America, I suffer from the well-known malady called hero-worship. Good Dr. Holmes, until recently of the Unity Church of New York, without knowing me personally became my advertising agent. Some of the nice things he said about me, I never knew myself. So I receive often embarrassing letters from America expecting me to perform miracles. Dr. Holmes was followed much later by the late Bishop Fisher who knew me personally in India. He very nearly dragged me to America but fates had ordained otherwise and I could not visit your vast and great country with its wonderful people.

"Moreover, you have given me a teacher in Thoreau, who furnished me through his essay on the 'Duty of Civil Disobedience' scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa. Great Britain gave me Ruskin, whose *Unto This Last* transformed me overnight from a lawyer and city dweller into a rustic living away from Durban on a farm, three miles from the nearest railway station; and Russia gave me in Tolstoy a teacher who furnished a reasoned basis for my non-violence. Tolstoy blessed my movement in South Africa when it was still in its infancy and of whose wonderful possibilities I had yet to learn. It was he who had prophesied in his letter to me that I was leading a movement which was destined to bring a message of hope to the downtrodden people of the earth. So you will see that I have not approached the present task in any spirit of enmity to Great Britain and the West. After having imbibed and assimilated the message of *Unto This Last*, I could not be guilty of approving of fascism or Nazism, whose cult is suppression of the individual and his liberty.

"I invite you to read my formula of withdrawal or as it has been popularly called 'Quit India' with this background. You may not read into it more than the context warrants.

"I claim to be a votary of Truth from my childhood. It was the most natural thing to me. My prayerful search gave me the revealing maxim 'Truth is God', instead of the usual one 'God is Truth.' That maxim enables me to see God face to face as it were. I feel Him pervade every fibre of my being. With this Truth as witness

between you and me, I assert that I would not have asked my country to invite Great Britain to withdraw her rule over India, irrespective of any demand to the contrary, if I had not seen at once that, for the sake of Great Britain and the allied cause, it was necessary for Britain boldly to perform the duty of freeing India from bondage. Without this essential act of tardy justice, Great Britain could not justify her position before the unmurmuring world conscience, which is there nevertheless. Singapore, Malaya and Burma taught me that the disaster must not be repeated in India. I make bold to say that it cannot be averted unless Great Britain trusts the people of India to use their liberty in favour of the allied cause. By that supreme act of justice, Britain would have taken away all cause for the seething discontent of India. She will turn the growing ill will into active goodwill. I submit that it is worth all the battleships and airships that your wonder-working engineers and financial resources can produce.

"I know that interested propaganda has filled your ears and eyes with distorted versions of the Congress position. I have been painted as a hypocrite and enemy of Britain under disguise. My demonstrable spirit of accommodation has been described as my inconsistency, proving me to be an utterly unreliable man. I am not going to burden this letter with proof in support of my assertions. If the credit I have enjoyed in America will not stand me in good stead, nothing I may argue in self-defence will carry conviction against the formidable but false propaganda that has poisoned American ears.

"You have made common cause with Great Britain. You cannot, therefore, disown responsibility for anything that her representatives do in India. You will do a grievous wrong to the allied cause, if you do not sift the truth from the chaff whilst there is yet time. Just think of it. Is there anything wrong in the Congress demanding unconditional recognition of India's independence? It is being said, 'But this is not the time.' We say, 'This is the psychological moment for that recognition.' For, then and then only, can there be irresistible opposition to the Japanese aggression. It is of immense value to the allied cause, if it is also of equal value to India. The Congress has anticipated and provided for every possible difficulty in the way of recognition. I want you to look upon the immediate recognition of India's independence as a war measure of first-class magnitude."

On the train, he also wrote replies to various questions raised by his numerous correspondents. "How is Britain to know what sort of 'resistance' the proposed Indian Government would organize?" asked a *Manchester Guardian* correspondent.

"This is a good question," said Gandhi. "But who can speak for the proposed Indian government? It must be clear that it won't be Congress government, nor will it be Hindu Mahasabha government, nor Muslim League government. It will be an all-India government. It will be a government not backed by any military power, unless the so-called military classes seize the opportunity and overawe the populace and declare themselves the government, as Franco has done. If they play the game, then the proposed government would be a government, though provisional in the first instance, broadbased upon the will of the people. Let us assume that the military-minded persons being without the backing of powerful British arms will think wise not to seize power. The popular government to be must represent Parsis, Jews, Christians, Muslims and Hindus, not as separate religious groups, but as Indians. The vast majority won't be believers in non-violence. The Congress does not believe in non-violence as a creed. Very few go to the extreme length I do, as *Manchester Guardian* properly puts it. The Maulana and Pandit Nehru 'believe in offering armed resistance'. And I may add, so do many Congressmen. Therefore, whether in the country as a whole or in the Congress, I shall be in hopeless minority. But for me, even if I find myself in a minority of one, my course is clear. My non-violence is on its trial. I hope that I shall come out unscathed through the ordeal. My faith in its efficacy is unflinching. If I could turn India, Great Britain and America and the rest of the whole world including the Axis powers in the direction of non-violence, I should do so."

Question: "What do you expect the editors to do in the crisis that has overtaken us?"

Answer: "I am proud of the way the Indian press as a whole has reacted to the Congress resolution. The acid test has yet to come. I hope the press will then fearlessly represent the national cause. It is better not to issue newspapers than to issue them under a feeling of suppression. At the same time, I do not want them to be blind followers of the Congress and to endorse what their reason or conscience rebels against. The national cause will never suffer by honest

criticism of national institutions and national policies. The danger to be guarded against is the inflaming of communal passions. The forthcoming movement will mean nothing, if it does not end in bringing communal harmony and honourable peace with the British people. Whatever may be said to the contrary, I maintain that the Congress policy has been framed in no hostile spirit against the British people. For, the spirit behind the policy is wholly non-violent. I do hope, therefore, that the press will warn those who have the nation's cause at heart against countenancing violence either against the British people or among ourselves. It must retard our progress towards our goal."

Question: "Instead of striving for India's freedom, why would you not strive for a far greater and nobler end—a world federation? Surely that will automatically include India's freedom as the greater includes the less."

Answer: "There is an obvious fallacy in this question. Federation is undoubtedly a greater and nobler end for free nations. It is a greater and nobler end for them to strive to promote federation than be self-centred, seeking only to preserve their own freedom. They are finding it difficult, if not impossible, for the individuals to retain freedom without a combination. It has become a necessity while the war lasts, and it would be good if they voluntarily pledge themselves now, to remain united even after the war. Defeat of any one member should make no difference. The survivors will not rest content, till the defeated member is avenged. Still this will not be a world federation. It would be a mere defensive alliance between a certain combination. The very first step to a world federation is to recognize the freedom of the conquered and exploited nations. Thus, India and Africa have to be freed. The second step would be to announce to and assure the aggressor powers, in the present instance, the Axis powers, that immediately the war ends, they will be recognized as members of the world federation in the same sense as the allies. This presupposes an agreement among the members of world federation as to the irreducible fundamentals. If this is not forthcoming, the federation will fall to pieces under the slightest strain. Therefore, it has to come about voluntarily. I suggest that non-violence is the basis of voluntariness. It is because of all the nations of the world India is the one nation which has a message, however limited and crude it may be, in that direction that it must

have immediate freedom to enable it to play its part. You may not quote against me Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I know that they do not hold the view I hold on non-violence. When India gets her freedom, the probability is that I shall no longer be wanted by any party and everybody will be war mad. Nevertheless there will be, I am quite sure, a respectable number of votaries for non-violence, who will make their contribution. But this subject is not germane to the question. Moreover, I am discussing that aspect fully elsewhere. I hope you will agree with me that India, in seeking first to be free, is not retarding federation. It wants her freedom for the sake of the nations in distress, especially China and Russia, and for the whole of humanity—in your language, world federation. You will also, I hope, see that no universal federation is possible without India becoming free now. It would be an earnest too of the allied declarations."

On the very eve of the momentous meeting of the A.-I.C.C., the Government gave the widest publicity to the Working Committee notes seized recently at Allahabad. "In spite of the effort of the Home Department to discredit the members of the Working Committee," stated Gandhi, "the reading of the notes, unauthentic though they are, will not make any difference, at least in India, in the prestige which the Congress enjoys. There is nothing in it of which any member has any cause to be ashamed." In reply to the Government action he gave the widest publicity to the instructions issued by Sir Frederick Puckle, the Secretary to the Government of India. The "Puckle Circular" dated July 17 opened as follows:

"We have three weeks until the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay on August the 7th. During this time, the matter is mainly a problem of propaganda to mobilize opinion against the concrete proposals contained in the Congress resolution and the threat with which the resolution concludes, described by Gandhi as 'open rebellion'. We have to encourage those on whose support we can depend, win over the waverers, and avoid stiffening the determination of Congressmen; with the object either of putting pressure on the Congress to withdraw from its position, or, if action has to be taken against the Congress, to secure that such action has the support of public opinion inside and outside India. Please intensify your publicity through all the available channels with the aim of securing openly expressed and reasoned opposition

to the scheme of the resolution from individuals of influence and important non-Congress organizations."

Gandhi's comment on the circular was as follows:

"I have had the good fortune to have friends who have supplied me with titbits of national importance, such as I am presenting to the public here. Mahadev Desai reminds me that such an occasion occurred some seven years ago, when a friend had unearthed the famous Hallet circular. Such was also an occasion, when the late Shraddhanandji was given an important document, though not of the sensational character as the Hallet circular, or Sir Frederick Puckle's very interesting production and that of his lieutenant Shri D. C. Das. The pity of it is that the circulars were secret. They must thank me for giving the performance as wide a publicity as I can. For, it is good for the public to know to what lengths the Government can go in their attempt to suppress national movements, however innocent, open and above-board they are. Heaven knows how many such secret instructions have been issued which have never seen the light of day. I suggest an honourable course. Let the Government by all means influence public opinion in an open manner and abide by its verdict. The Congress will be satisfied with a plebiscite or any other reasonable manner of testing public opinion and undertake to accept the verdict. That is real democracy. *Vox populi vox dei.*

"Meanwhile, let the public know that these circulars are an additional reason for the cry of 'Quit India', which comes not from the lips, but the aching hearts of millions. Let the masses know that there are many other ways of earning a living than betraying the national interests. Surely, it is no part of their duty to lend themselves to the very questionable methods as evidenced by Sir Frederick Puckle's instructions."

Quit India Resolution

1942

THE CONGRESS Working Committee met in Bombay in the first week of August 1942. Gandhi was there guiding the members in framing the historic resolution, later known as the "Quit India" resolution. After a prolonged discussion, the committee adopted the following resolution to be placed before the A.-I.C.C.:

"The All-India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Congress Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to the subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government, and the comments and criticisms made in India and abroad. The committee approves of and endorses that resolution and is of the opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

"The committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the situation on the Russian and the Chinese fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese peoples its high appreciation of their heroism in defence of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all who strive for freedom and sympathize with victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policy so far pursued by the allied nations, which has led to repeated and disastrous failure. It is not by adhering to such aims, policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much, as on the domination of subject and colonial

countries, and the continuation of the imperialistic tradition and method. The possession of empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the people of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm.

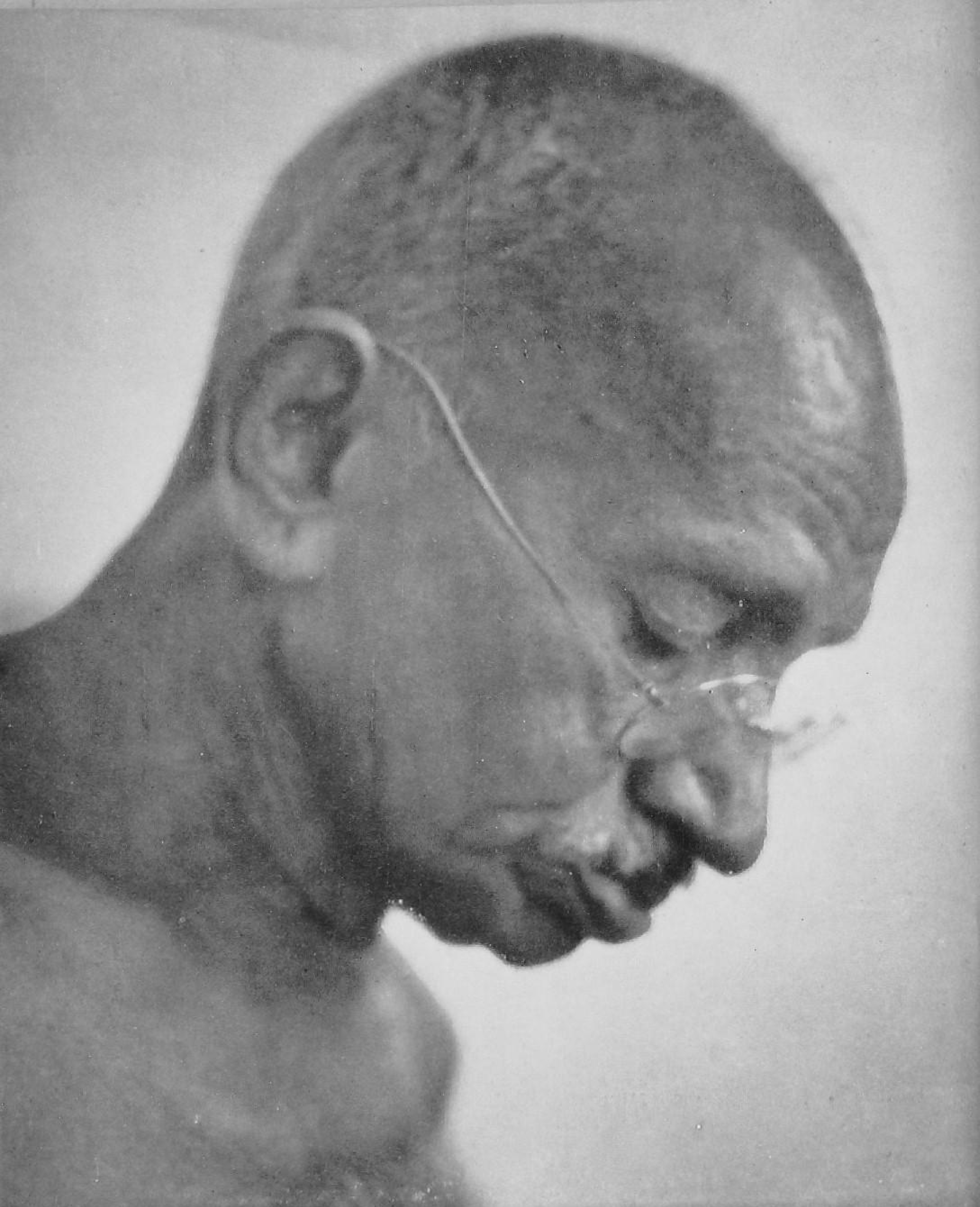
"The ending of the British rule in India is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of the war and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing all her great resources in the struggle for her freedom and against the aggression of Nazism and fascism and imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the war, but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these nations, whose ally India would be, moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British imperialism and the taint of that imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations.

"The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the war.

"The A.-I.C.C., therefore, repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The provisional government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country. It will thus be a composite government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with the allied powers, and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The provisional

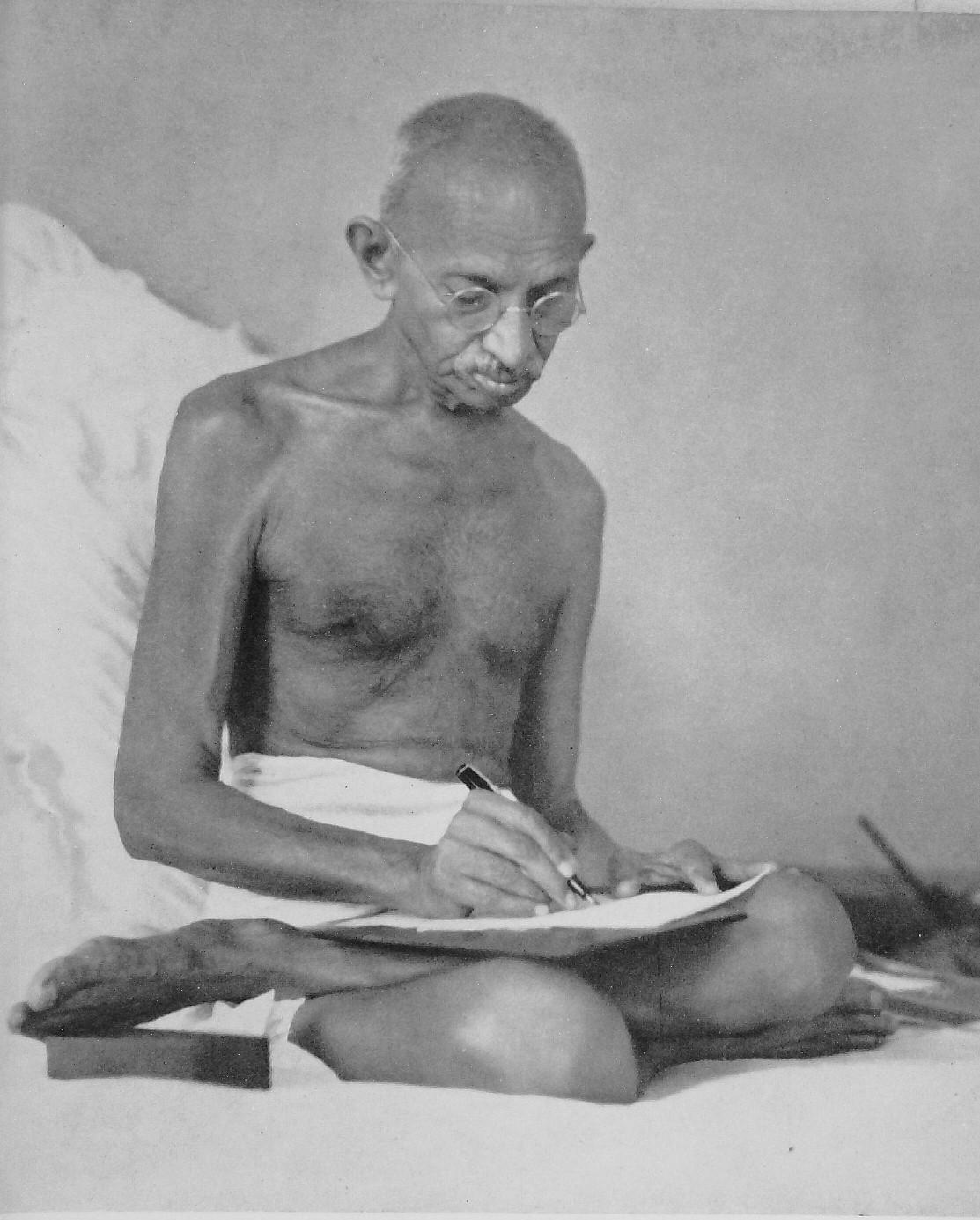
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi arrives in Bombay, August 1942



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi, Bombay, August 1942



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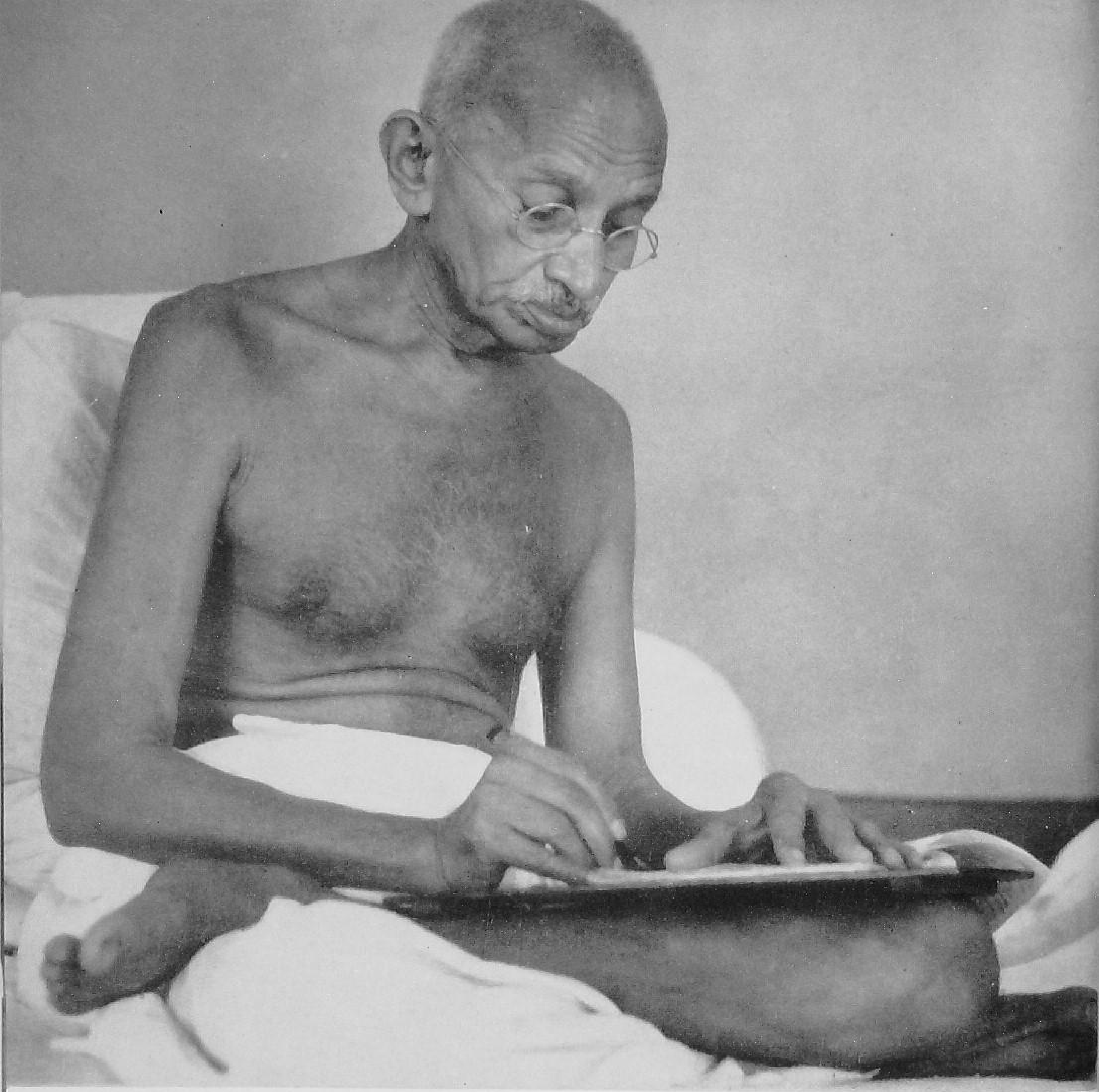
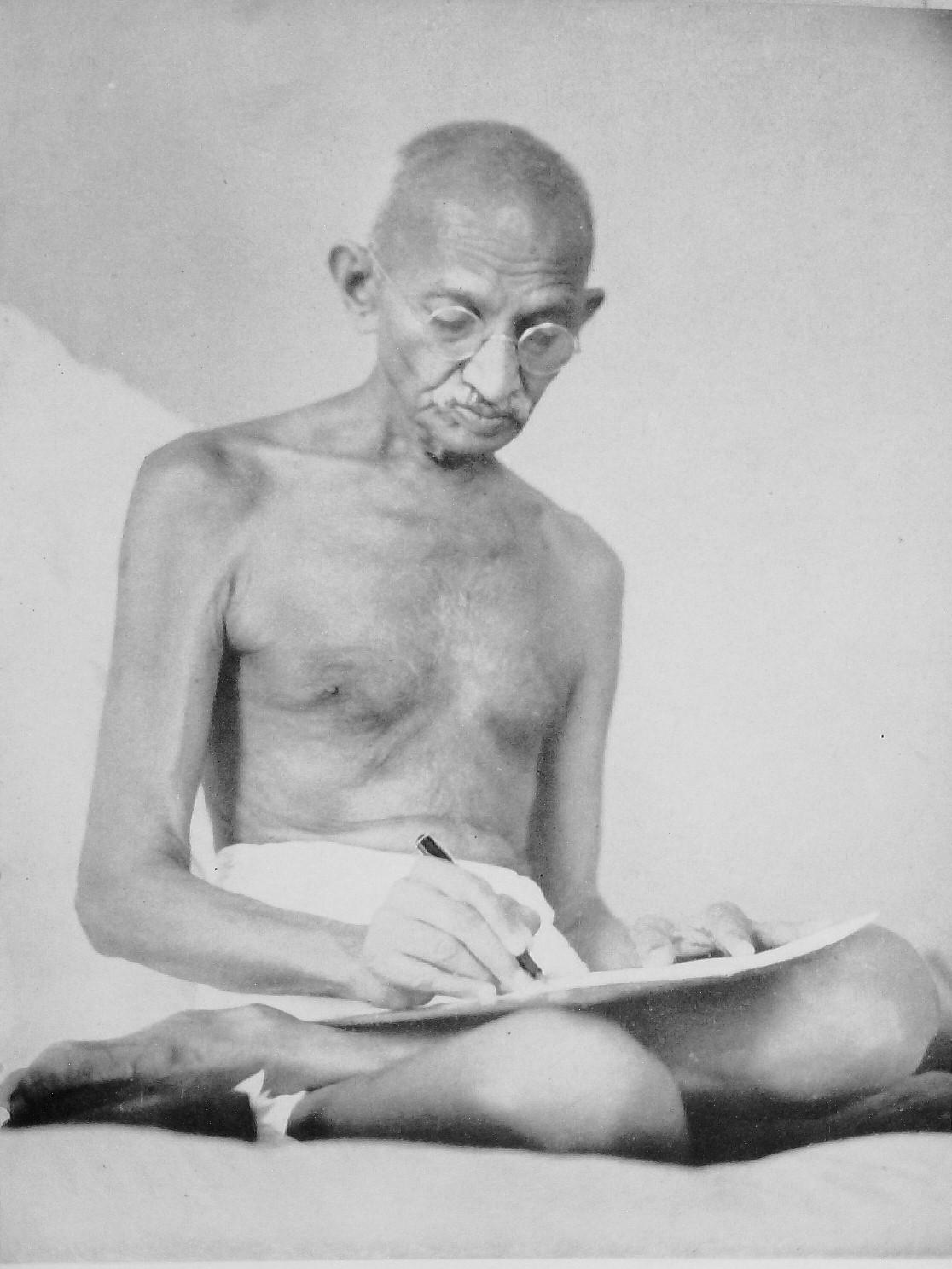
During the memorable days of August 1942



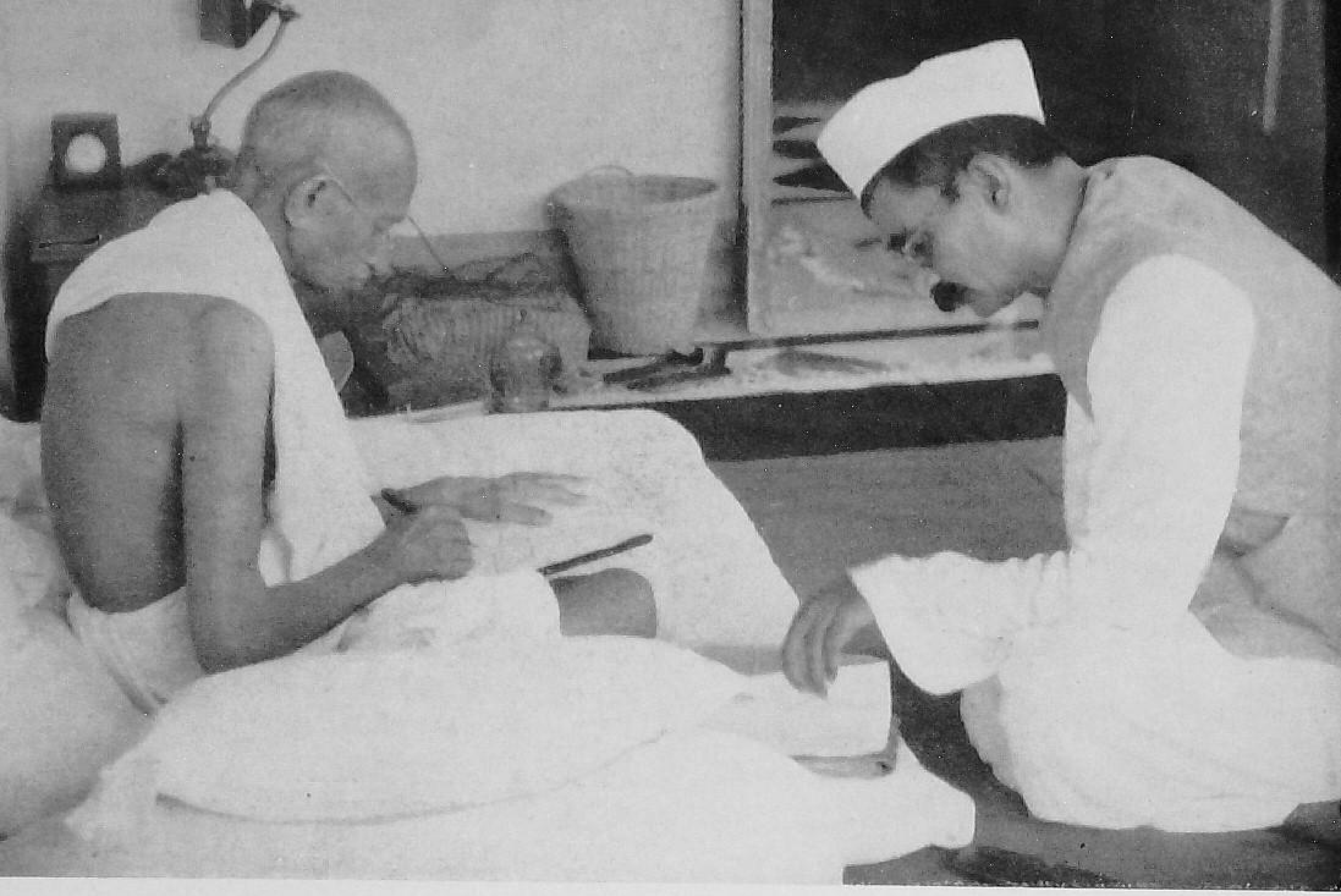
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi drafts historic document, Bombay, August 1942



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi drafts historic document, Bombay, August 1942



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

With Rajendra Prasad, Bombay

government will evolve a scheme for a constituent assembly which will prepare a constitution for the governance of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the allied nations will be adjusted by the representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

"The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch East Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other colonial power.

"While the A.-I.C.C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the committee is of the opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a world federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of modern world be solved. Such a world federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a world federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries, national armies, navy and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a world federal defence force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

"An independent India would gladly join such a world peace and prevent aggression.

"An independent India would gladly join such a world federation and co-operate on an equal basis with other countries in the solution of international problems.

"Such a federation would be open to all the nations, who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the war, however, the

federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined only to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the war, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

"The committee regretfully realizes, however, that despite tragic and overwhelming lessons of the war and the perils that overhang the world, the governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards world federation. The reactions of the British Government and the misguided criticisms of the foreign press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and to these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and no service to the peoples of the United Nations. The earnest appeal of the Congress Working Committee to Great Britain and the United Nations has so far met with no response, and criticism made in many foreign quarters has shown ignorance of India's and the world's need, and sometimes even hostility to India's freedom, which is significant of a mentality of domination and of racial superiority which cannot be tolerated by a proud people conscious of their strength and of the justice of their cause.

"The A.-I.C.C. would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Great Britain and the United Nations. But the committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government, which dominates over and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The committee resolves, therefore, to sanction, for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilize all non-violent strength it has gathered during the last twenty-two

years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the committee requests him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken.

"The committee appeals to the people of India to face dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as the disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come, when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach people, and when no Congress committee can function. When this happens, every man and woman, who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and the deliverance of India.

"Lastly, whilst the A.-I.C.C. has stated its own view of the future governance under free India and the A.-I.C.C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on mass struggle it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India."

Opening the A.-I.C.C. proceedings in Bombay on August 7, the Congress President pointed out that on the failure of the Cripps mission, the only course open to the committee was to take the decision reached at Allahabad.

"The menace of aggression to India," observed President Azad, "was ever increasing and the danger which was only a distant one a few months ago, was fast approaching them. In the face of such danger, it would be a calamity to allow people to become sullen and down-hearted. The Congress wanted to see that every Indian youth took part in resisting aggression. If the people of India were indifferent and sullen, the responsibility was not that of the Congress but that of the British Government."

The Congress President explained that the "Quit India" demand did not mean the physical removal of all the Britishers from India. It only meant the transfer of political power to the Indian hands. After the president, Gandhi addressed the meeting in Hindustani outlining his plan of action:

"Before you discuss the resolution, let me place before you one or two things. I want you to understand two things very clearly and to consider them from the same point of view from which I am placing them before you. I ask you to consider it from my point of view, because if you approve of it, you will be enjoined to carry out all I say. It will be a great responsibility. There are people who ask me whether I am the same man that I was in 1920, or whether there has been any change in me. You are right in asking that question.

"Let me, however, hasten to assure you that I am the same Gandhi as I was in 1920. I have not changed in any fundamental respect. I attach the same importance to non-violence that I did then. If at all, my emphasis on it has grown stronger. There is no real contradiction between the present resolution and my previous writings and utterances.

"Occasions like the present do not occur in everybody's and but rarely in anybody's life. I want you to know and feel that there is nothing but purest ahimsa in all that I am saying and doing today. The draft resolution of the Working Committee is based on ahimsa, the contemplated struggle similarly has its roots in ahimsa. If, therefore, there is any among you who has lost faith in ahimsa or is wearied of it, let him not vote for this resolution.

"Let me explain my position clearly. God has vouchsafed to me a priceless gift in the weapon of ahimsa. I and my ahimsa are on our trial today. If in the present crisis, when the earth is being scorched by the flames of *himsa* and crying for deliverance, I failed to make use of the god-given talent, God will not forgive me and I shall be judged unworthy of the great gift. I must act now. I may not hesitate and merely look on, when Russia and China are threatened."

He emphasized: "Ours is not a drive for power, but purely a non-violent fight for India's independence. In a violent struggle, a successful general has been often known to effect a military coup and to set up a dictatorship. But under the Congress scheme of things, essentially non-violent as it is, there can be no room for dictatorship. A non-violent soldier of freedom will covet nothing for himself, he fights only for the freedom of his country. The Congress is unconcerned as to who will rule, when freedom is attained. The power, when it comes, will belong to the people of India, and

it will be for them to decide to whom it should be entrusted. May be that the reins will be placed in the hands of the Parsis, for instance—as I would love to see happen—or they may be handed to some others whose names are not heard in the Congress today. It will not be for you then to object saying, 'This community is microscopic. That party did not play its due part in the freedom's struggle; why should it have all the power?' Ever since its inception the Congress has kept itself meticulously free of the communal taint. It has thought always in terms of the whole nation and has acted accordingly. . .

"I know how imperfect our ahimsa is and how far away we are still from the ideal, but in ahimsa there is no final failure or defeat. I have faith, therefore, that if, in spite of our shortcomings, the big thing does happen, it will be because God wanted to help us by crowning with success our silent, unremitting *sadhana* for the last twenty-two years."

"I believe," he said, "that in the history of the world, there has not been a more genuinely democratic struggle for freedom than ours. I read Carlyle's *French Revolution* while I was in prison, and Pandit Jawaharlal has told me something about the Russian revolution. But it is my conviction that inasmuch as these struggles were fought with the weapon of violence they failed to realize the democratic ideal. In the democracy which I have envisaged, a democracy established by non-violence, there will be equal freedom for all. Everybody will be his own master. It is to join a struggle for such democracy that I invite you today. Once you realize this you will forget the differences between the Hindus and Muslims, and think of yourselves as Indians only, engaged in the common struggle for independence."

Concluding his speech, Gandhi said:

"Then, there is the question of your attitude towards the British. I have noticed that there is hatred towards the British among the people. The people say they are disgusted with their behaviour. The people make no distinction between British imperialism and the British people. To them, the two are one. This hatred would even make them welcome the Japanese. It is most dangerous. It means that they will exchange one slavery for another. We must get rid of this feeling. Our quarrel is not with the British people, we fight their imperialism. The proposal for the withdrawal of British

power did not come out of anger. It came to enable India to play its due part at the present critical juncture. It is not a happy position for a big country like India to be merely helping with money and material obtained willynilly from her while the United Nations are conducting the war. We cannot evoke the true spirit of sacrifice and valour, so long as we do not feel that it is our war, so long as we are not free. I know the British Government will not be able to withhold freedom from us, when we have made enough self-sacrifice. We must, therefore, purge ourselves of hatred. Speaking for myself, I can say that I have never felt any hatred. As a matter of fact, I feel myself to be a greater friend of the British now than ever before. One reason is that they are today in distress. My very friendship, therefore, demands that I should try to save them from their mistakes. As I view the situation, they are on the brink of an abyss. It, therefore, becomes my duty to warn them of their danger even though it may, for the time being, anger them to the point of cutting off the friendly hand that is stretched out to help them. People may laugh, nevertheless that is my claim. At a time when I may have to launch the biggest struggle of my life, I may not harbour hatred against anybody."

Following Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, who moved the resolution, explained: "The resolution was in no sense a challenge to anyone. If British Government accepted the proposal, it would change the position for the better, both internal and international, from every point of view. The position of China would be improved. Whatever change might come about in India, it must be for the better. The A.-I.C.C. knew that Gandhiji had agreed that British and other foreign armed forces stationed in India might continue."

Seconding the resolution, Sardar Patel said that for three years the Congress had been scrupulously adhering to the policy of non-embarrassment, but this attitude was not appreciated by the British. The Congress could wait no longer. "If America and England were still thinking that they could fight their enemies from India without the co-operation of four hundred millions of people, they were foolish. It must dawn on the people that this war was a people's war and they should fight for their country and for their freedom. And so long as this feeling was non-existent, no amount of propaganda through the newspapers and the radio could rouse the people to a supreme effort."

When the A.-I.C.C. met on the 8th, a number of amendments to the Working Committee resolution were moved mostly by the communists. Nehru, replying to the opposition, reiterated the offer of co-operation outlined in the official resolution and said: "This resolution is not a threat. It is an invitation. It is an explanation; it is an offer of co-operation. It is all that. But still, behind it there is a clear indication that certain consequences will follow if certain events do not happen. It is an offer of co-operation of a free India. On any other terms, there will be no co-operation. On any other terms, our resolution promises only conflict and struggle."

Azad referred the efforts made by him to bring about a communal settlement. If the League was willing to negotiate, he would persuade the Congress within twenty-four hours to start negotiations. He then put the amendments to vote. Three amendments were withdrawn and the remaining were all rejected, only twelve members voting in their favour. The original resolution was then put to vote and was carried with overwhelming majority, only thirteen communists voting against. Azad declared the resolution passed amidst loud and continued cheers.

Gandhi then addressed the house for two hours in Hindustani and English. Speaking in Hindustani, he said:

"I congratulate you on the resolution that you have just passed. I also congratulate the three comrades on the courage they have shown in pressing their amendments to a division, even though they knew that there was an overwhelming majority in favour of the resolution, and I congratulate the thirteen friends who voted against the resolution. In doing so, they had nothing to be ashamed of. For the last twenty years we have tried to learn not to lose courage even when we are in a hopeless minority and are laughed at. We have learned to hold on to our beliefs in the confidence that we are in the right. It behoves us to cultivate this courage of conviction, for it ennobles man and raises his moral stature. I was, therefore, glad to see that these friends had imbibed the principle which I have tried to follow for the last fifty years and more.

"Having congratulated them on their courage, let me say that what they asked this committee to accept through their amendments was not the correct representation of the situation. These friends ought to have pondered over the appeal made to them by the Maulana to withdraw their amendments; they should have

carefully followed the explanations given by Jawaharlal. Had they done so, it would have been clear to them that the right which they now want the Congress to concede has already been conceded by the Congress.

"Time was when every Musalman claimed the whole of India as his motherland. During the years that the Ali brothers were with me, the assumption underlying all their talks and discussions was that India belonged as much to the Musalmans as to the Hindus. I can testify to the fact that this was their innermost conviction and not a mask; I lived with them for years. I spent days and nights in their company. And I make bold to say that their utterances were the honest expression of their beliefs. I know there are some who say that I take things too readily at their face value, that I am gullible. I do not think I am such a simpleton, nor am I so gullible as these friends take me to be. But their criticism does not hurt me. I should prefer to be considered gullible rather than deceitful.

"What these communist friends proposed through their amendments is nothing new. It has been repeated from thousands of platforms. Thousands of Musalmans have told me, that if Hindu-Muslim question was to be solved satisfactorily, it must be done in my lifetime. I should feel flattered at this; but how can I agree to a proposal which does not appeal to my reason? Hindu-Muslim unity is not a new thing. Millions of Hindus and Musalmans have sought after it. I consciously strove for its achievement from my boyhood. While at school, I made it a point to cultivate the friendship of Muslim and Parsi co-students. I believed even at that tender age that the Hindus in India, if they wished to live in peace and amity with the other communities, should assiduously cultivate the virtue of neighbourliness. It did not matter, I felt, if I made no special effort to cultivate the friendship with Hindus, but I must make friends with at least a few Musalmans. It was as counsel for a Musalman merchant that I went to South Africa. I made friends with other Musalmans there, even with the opponents of my client, and gained a reputation for integrity and good faith. I had among my friends and co-workers Muslims as well as Parsis. I captured their hearts and when I left finally for India, I left them sad and shedding tears of grief at the separation.

"In India too I continued my efforts and left no stone unturned to achieve that unity. It was my life-long aspiration for it that made

me offer my fullest co-operation to the Musalmans in the Khilafat movement. Muslims throughout the country accepted me as their true friend.

"How then is it that I have now come to be regarded as so evil and detestable? Had I any axe to grind in supporting the Khilafat movement? True, I did in my heart of hearts cherish a hope that it might enable me to save the cow. I am a worshipper of the cow. I believe the cow and myself to be the creation of the same God, and I am prepared to sacrifice my life in order to save the cow. But, whatever my philosophy of life and my ultimate hopes, I joined the movement in no spirit of bargain. I co-operated in the struggle for the Khilafat solely in order to discharge my obligation to my neighbour who, I saw, was in distress. The Ali brothers, had they been alive today, would have testified to the truth of this assertion. And so would many others bear me out in that it was not a bargain on my part for saving the cow. The cow like the Khilafat, stood on her own merits. As an honest man, a true neighbour and a faithful friend, it was incumbent on me to stand by the Musalmans in the hour of their trial.

"In those days, I shocked the Hindus by dining with the Musalmans, though with the passage of time they have now got used to it. Maulana Bari told me, however, that though he would insist on having me as his guest, he would not allow me to dine with him, lest some day he should be accused of a sinister motive. And so, whenever I had occasion to stay with him, he called a Brahmin cook and made special arrangements for separate cooking. Firangi Mahal, his residence, was an old-styled structure with limited accommodation; yet he cheerfully bore all hardships and carried out his resolve from which I could not dislodge him. It was the spirit of courtesy, dignity and nobility that inspired us in those days. The members of each community vied with one another in accommodating members of sister communities. They respected one another's religious feelings, and considered it a privilege to do so. Not a trace of suspicion lurked in anybody's heart. Where has all that dignity, that nobility of spirit, disappeared now? I should ask all Musalmans, including Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, to recall those glorious days and to find out what has brought us to the present impasse. Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah himself was at one time a Congressman. If today the Congress has incurred his wrath, it is because the canker of

suspicion has entered his heart. May God bless him with long life, but when I am gone, he will realize and admit that I had no designs on Musalmans and that I had never betrayed their interests. Where is the escape for me, if I injure their cause or betray their interests? My life is entirely at their disposal. They are free to put an end to it, whenever they wish to do so. Assaults have been made on my life in the past, but God has spared me till now, and the assailants have repented for their action. But if someone were to shoot me in the belief that he was getting rid of a rascal, he would kill not the real Gandhi, but the one that appeared to him a rascal.

"To those who have been indulging in a campaign of abuse and vilification I would say, 'Islam enjoins you not to revile even an enemy. The Prophet treated even enemies with kindness and tried to win them over by his fairness and generosity. Are you followers of that Islam or of any other? If you are followers of the true Islam, does it behove you to distrust the words of one who makes a public declaration of his faith? You may take it from me that one day you will regret the fact that you distrusted and killed one who was a true and devoted friend of yours.' It cuts me to the quick to see that the more I appeal and the more the Maulana importunes, the more intense does the campaign of vilification grow. To me, these abuses are like bullets. They can kill me, even as a bullet can put an end to my life. You may kill me. That will not hurt me. But what of those who indulge in abusing? They bring discredit to Islam. For the fair name of Islam, I appeal to you to resist this unceasing campaign of abuse and vilification.

"Maulana Saheb is being made a target for the filthiest abuse. Why? Because he refuses to exert on me the pressure of his friendship. He realizes that it is a misuse of friendship to seek to compel a friend to accept as truth what he knows is an untruth.

"To the Qaid-e-Azam I would say: 'Whatever is true and valid in the claim for Pakistan is already in your hands. What is wrong and untenable is in nobody's gift, so that it can be made over to you. Even if someone were to succeed in imposing an untruth on others, he would not be able to enjoy for long the fruits of such a coercion. God dislikes pride and keeps away from it. God would not tolerate a forcible imposition of an untruth.'

"The Qaid-e-Azam says that he is compelled to say bitter things but that he cannot help giving expression to his thoughts and his

feelings. Similarly I would say: I consider myself a friend of Musalmans. Why should I then not give expression to the things nearest to my heart, even at the cost of displeasing them? How can I conceal my innermost thoughts from them? I should congratulate the Qaid-e-Azam on his frankness in giving expression to his thoughts and feelings, even if they sound bitter to his hearers. But even so why should the Musalmans sitting here be reviled, if they do not see eye to eye with him? If millions of Musalmans are with you, can you not afford to ignore the handful of Musalmans who may appear to you to be misguided? Why should one with the following of several millions be afraid of a majority community, or of the minority being swamped by the majority? How did the Prophet work among the Arabs and the Musalmans? How did he propagate Islam? Did he say he would propagate Islam only when he commanded a majority? I appeal to you for the sake of Islam to ponder over what I say. There is neither fair play nor justice in saying that the Congress must accept a thing, even if it does not believe in it and even if it, goes counter to principles it holds dear.

"Rajaji said: 'I do not believe in Pakistan. But Musalmans ask for it, Mr. Jinnah asks for it, and it has become an obsession with them. Why not then say 'yes' to them just now? The same Mr. Jinnah will later on realize the disadvantages of Pakistan and will forgo the demand.' I said: 'It is not fair to accept as true a thing which I hold to be untrue, and ask others to do so in the belief that the demand will not be pressed when the time comes for settling it finally. If I hold the demand to be just, I should concede it this very day. I should not agree to it merely in order to placate Jinnah Saheb. Many friends have come and asked me to agree to it for the time being to placate Mr. Jinnah, disarm his suspicions and to see how he reacts to it. But I cannot be party to a course of action with a false promise. At any rate, it is not my method.'

"The Congress has no sanction but the moral one for enforcing its decisions. It believes that true democracy can only be the outcome of non-violence. The structure of a world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence, and violence will have to be totally abjured from world affairs. If this is true, the solution of Hindu-Muslim question, too, cannot be achieved by a resort to violence. If the Hindus tyrannize over the Musalmans, with what face will they talk of a world federation? It is for the same reason

that I do not believe in the possibility of establishing world peace through violence as the English and American statesmen propose to do. The Congress has agreed to submitting all the differences to an impartial international tribunal and to abide by its decisions. If even this fairest of proposals is unacceptable, the only course that remains open is that of the sword, of violence. How can I persuade myself to agree to an impossibility? To demand the vivisection of a living organism is to ask for its very life. It is a call to war. The Congress cannot be party to such a fratricidal war. Those Hindus who, like Dr. Moonje and Shri Savarkar, believe in the doctrine of the sword may seek to keep the Musalmans under Hindu domination. I do not represent that section. I represent the Congress. You want to kill the Congress which is the goose that lays golden eggs. If you distrust the Congress, you may rest assured that there is to be perpetual war between the Hindus and the Musalmans, and the country will be doomed to continue warfare and bloodshed. If such warfare is to be our lot, I shall not live to witness it.

"It is for that reason that I say to Jinnah Saheb, 'You may take it from me that whatever in your demand for Pakistan accords with considerations of justice and equity is lying in your pocket; whatever in the demand is contrary to justice and equity you can take only by the sword and in no other manner.'

"There is much in my heart that I would like to pour out before this assembly. One thing which was uppermost in my heart I have already dealt with. You may take it from me that it is with me a matter of life and death. If we Hindus and Musalmans mean to achieve a heart unity, without the slightest mental reservation on the part of either, we must first unite in the effort to be free from the shackles of this empire. If Pakistan after all is to be a portion of India, what objection can there be for Musalmans against joining this struggle for India's freedom? The Hindus and Musalmans must, therefore, unite in the first instance on the issue of fighting for freedom. Jinnah Saheb thinks the war will last long. I do not agree with him. If the war goes on for six months more, how shall we be able to save China?

"I, therefore, want freedom immediately, this very night, before dawn, if it can be had. Freedom cannot now wait for the realization of communal unity. If that unity is not achieved, sacrifices necessary for it will have to be much greater than would have otherwise

sufficed. But the Congress must win freedom or be wiped out in the effort. And forget not that the freedom which the Congress is struggling to achieve will not be for the Congressmen alone but for all the forty crores of the Indian people. Congressmen must forever remain humble servants of the people.

"The Qaid-e-Azam has said that the Muslim League is prepared to take over the rule from the Britishers if they are prepared to hand it over to the Muslim League, for the British took over the empire from the hands of the Muslims. This, however, will be Muslim raj. The offer made by Maulana Saheb and by me does not imply establishment of Muslim raj or Muslim domination. The Congress does not believe in the domination of any group or any community. It believes in democracy which includes in its orbit Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Parsis, Jews—every one of the communities inhabiting this vast country. If Muslim raj is inevitable, then let it be; but how can we give it the stamp of our assent? How can we agree to the domination of one community over the others?

"Millions of Musalmans in this country come from Hindu stock. How can their homeland be any other than India? My eldest son embraced Islam some years back. What would his homeland be—Porbander or the Punjab? I ask the Musalmans: 'If India is not your homeland, what other country do you belong to? In what separate homeland would you put my son who embraced Islam?' His mother wrote him a letter after his conversion, asking him if he had on embracing Islam given up drinking which Islam forbids to its followers. To those who gloated over the conversion, she wrote to say: 'I do not mind his becoming a Musalman, so much as his drinking. Will you, as pious Musalmans, tolerate his drinking even after his conversion? He has reduced himself to the state of a rake by drinking. If you are going to make a man of him again, his conversion will have been turned to good account. You will, therefore, please see that he as a Musalman abjures wine and woman. If that change does not come about, his conversion goes in vain and our non-co-operation with him will have to continue.'

"India is without doubt the homeland of all the Musalmans inhabiting this country. Every Musalman should therefore co-operate in the fight for India's freedom. The Congress does not belong to any one class or community; it belongs to the whole nation. It is open to Musalmans to take possession of the Congress. They can, if

they like, swamp the Congress by their numbers, and can steer it along the course which appeals to them. The Congress is fighting not on behalf of the Hindus but on behalf of the whole nation, including the minorities. It would hurt me to hear of a single instance of a Musalman being killed by a Congressman. In the coming revolution, Congressmen will sacrifice their lives in order to protect the Musalman against a Hindu's attack and *vice versa*. It is a part of their creed, and is one of the essentials of non-violence. You will be expected on occasions like these not to lose your heads. Every Congressman, whether a Hindu or a Musalman, owes this duty to the organization to which he belongs. The Musalman who will act in this manner will render a service to Islam. Mutual trust is essential for success in the final nation-wide struggle that is to come.

"I have said that much greater sacrifices will have to be made this time in the wake of our struggle because of the opposition from the Muslim League and from Englishmen. You have seen the secret circular issued by Sir Frederick Puckle. It is a suicidal course that he has taken. It contains an open incitement to organizations which crop up like mushrooms to combine to fight the Congress. We have thus to deal with an empire whose ways are crooked. Ours is a straight path which we can tread even with our eyes closed. That is the beauty of satyagraha.

"In satyagraha, there is no place for fraud or falsehood, or any kind of untruth. Fraud and untruth today are stalking the world. I cannot be a helpless witness to such a situation. I have travelled all over India as perhaps nobody in the present age has. The voiceless millions of the land saw in me their friend and representative, and I identified myself with them to an extent it was possible for a human being to do. I saw trust in their eyes, which I now want to turn to good account in fighting this empire upheld on untruth and violence. However gigantic the preparations that the empire has made, we must get out of its clutches. How can I remain silent at this supreme hour and hide my light under the bushel? Shall I ask the Japanese to tarry a while? If today I sit quiet and inactive, God will take me to task for not using up the treasure He had given me, in the midst of the conflagration that is enveloping the whole world. Had the condition been different, I should have asked you to wait yet awhile. But the situation now has become intolerable, and the Congress has no other course left for it.

"Nevertheless, the actual struggle does not commence this moment. You have only placed all your powers in my hands. I will now wait upon the Viceroy and plead with him for the acceptance of the Congress demand. That process is likely to take two or three weeks. What would you do in the meanwhile? What is the programme, for the interval, in which all can participate? As you know, the spinning wheel is the first thing that occurs to me. I made the same answer to the Maulana. He would have none of it, though he understood its import later. The fourteenfold constructive programme is, of course, there for you to carry out. What more should you do? I will tell you. Every one of you should, from this moment onwards, consider yourself a free man or woman, and act as if you are free and are no longer under the heel of this imperialism.

"It is not a make-believe that I am suggesting to you. It is the very essence of freedom. The bond of the slave is snapped the moment he considers himself to be a free being. He will plainly tell the master: 'I was your bondslave till this moment, but I am a slave no longer. You may kill me if you like, but if you keep me alive, I wish to tell you that if you release me from the bondage, of your own accord, I will ask for nothing more from you. You used to feed and clothe me, though I could have provided food and clothing for myself by my labour. I hitherto depended on you instead of on God, for food and raiment. But God has now inspired me with an urge for freedom and I am today a free man, and will no longer depend on you.'

"You may take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for ministries and the like. I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom. May be, he will propose the abolition of salt tax, the drink evil, etc. But I will say 'Nothing less than freedom'.

"Here is a mantra, a short one, that I give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The mantra is: 'Do or Die'. We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetration of our slavery. Every true Congressman or woman will join the struggle with an inflexible determination not to remain alive to see the country in bondage and slavery. Let that be your pledge. Keep jails out of your consideration. If the Government keep me free, I will spare you the trouble of filling the jails. I will not put on the Government

the strain of maintaining a large number of prisoners at a time, when it is in trouble. Let every man and woman live every moment of his or her life hereafter in the consciousness that he or she eats or lives for achieving freedom and will die, if need be, to attain that goal. Take a pledge, with God and your own conscience as witness, that you will no longer rest till freedom is achieved and will be prepared to lay down your lives in the attempt to achieve it. He who loses his life will gain it; he who will seek to save it shall lose it. Freedom is not for the coward or the faint-hearted.

"A word to the journalists. I congratulate you on the support you have hitherto given to the national demand. I know the restrictions and handicaps under which you have to labour. But I would now ask you to snap the chains that bind you. It should be the proud privilege of the newspapers to lead and set an example in laying down one's life for freedom. You have the pen which the Government can't suppress. I know you have large properties in the form of printing-presses, etc., and you would be afraid lest the Government should attach them. I do not ask you to invite an attachment of the printing-press voluntarily. For myself, I would not suppress my pen, even if the press was to be attached. As you know my press was attached in the past and returned later on. But I do not ask from you that final sacrifice. I suggest a middle way. You should now wind up your standing committee, and you may declare that you will give up writing under the present restrictions and take up the pen only when India has won her freedom. You may tell Sir Frederick Puckle that he can't expect from you a command performance, that his press notes are full of untruth, and that you will refuse to publish them. You will openly declare that you are wholeheartedly with the Congress. If you do this, you will have changed the atmosphere before the fight actually begins.

"From the princes I ask with all respect due to them a very small thing. I am a well-wisher of the princes. I was born in a state. My grandfather refused to salute with his right hand any prince other than his own. But he did not say to the prince, as I feel he ought to have said, that even his own master could not compel him, his minister, to act against his conscience. I have eaten the princes' salt and I would not be false to it. As a faithful servant, it is my duty to warn the princes that if they will act while I am still alive, the princes may come to occupy an honourable place in free India.

In Jawaharlal's scheme of free India, no privileges or the privileged classes have a place. Jawaharlal considers all property to be state-owned. He wants planned economy. He wants to reconstruct India according to plan. He likes to fly; I do not. I have kept a place for the princes and the zamindars in India that I envisage. I would ask the princes in all humility to enjoy through renunciation. The princes may renounce ownership over their properties and become their trustees in the true sense of the term. I visualize God in the assemblage of people. The princes may say to their people; 'You are the owners and masters of the state and we are your servants.' I would ask the princes to become servants of the people and render to them an account of their own services. The empire too bestows power on the princes, but they should prefer to derive power from their own people; and if they want to indulge in some innocent pleasures, they may seek to do so as servants of the people. I do not want the princes to live as paupers. But I would ask them: 'Do you want to remain slaves for all time? Why should you, instead of paying homage to a foreign power, not accept the sovereignty of your own people?' You may write to the Political Department: 'The people are now awake. How are we to withstand an avalanche before which even the large empires are crumbling? We therefore, shall belong to the people from today onwards. We shall sink or swim with them.' Believe me, there is nothing unconstitutional in the course I am suggesting. There are, so far as I know, no treaties enabling the empire to coerce the princes. The people of the states will also declare that though they are the princes' subjects, they are part of the Indian nation and that they will accept the leadership of the princes, if the latter cast their lot with the people, but not otherwise. If this declaration enrages the princes and they choose to kill the people, the latter will meet death bravely and unflinchingly, but will not go back on their word.

"Nothing, however, should be done secretly. This is an open rebellion. In this struggle secrecy is a sin. A free man would not engage in a secret movement. It is likely that when you gain freedom you will have a C.I.D. of your own, in spite of my advice to the contrary. But in the present struggle, we have to work openly and to receive bullets on our chest, without taking to heels.

"I have a word to say to Government servants also. They may not, if they like, resign their posts yet. The late Justice Ranade did

not resign his post, but he openly declared that he belonged to the Congress. He said to the Government that though he was a judge, he was a Congressman and would openly attend the sessions of the Congress, but that at the same time he would not let his political views warp his impartiality on the bench. He held Social Reform Conference in the very pandal of the Congress. I would ask all the Government servants to follow in the footsteps of Ranade and to declare their allegiance to the Congress as an answer to the secret circular issued by Sir Frederick Puckle.

"This is all that I ask of you just now. I will now write to the Viceroy. You will be able to read the correspondence not just now but when I publish it with the Viceroy's consent. But you are free to aver that you support the demand to be put forth in my letter. A judge came to me and said: 'We get secret circulars from high quarters. What are we to do?' I replied, 'If I were in your place, I would ignore the circulars. You may openly say to the Government: "I have received your secret circular. I am, however, with the Congress. Though I serve the Government for my livelihood, I am not going to obey these secret circulars or to employ underhand methods." '

"Soldiers too are covered by the present programme. I do not ask them just now to resign their posts and to leave the army. The soldiers come to me, Jawaharlal and the Maulana and say: 'We are wholly with you. We are tired of the governmental tyranny.' To these soldiers I would say: 'You may say to the Government, "Our hearts are with the Congress. We are not going to leave our posts. We will serve you so long as we receive your salaries. We will obey your just orders, but will refuse to fire on our own people." '

"To those who lack the courage to do this much I have nothing to say. They will go their own way. But if you can do this much, you may take it from me that the whole atmosphere will be electrified. Let the Government then shower bombs, if they like. But no power on earth will then be able to keep you in bondage any longer.

"If the students want to join the struggle only to go back to their studies after a while, I would not invite them to it. For the present, however, till the time that I frame a programme for the struggle, I would ask the students to say to their professors: 'We belong to the Congress. Do you belong to the Congress or to the Government? If you belong to the Congress, you need not vacate your posts. You

will remain at your posts but teach us and lead us unto freedom.' In all fights for freedom, the world over, the students have made very large contributions.

"If in the interval that is left to us before the actual fight begins, you do even the little I have suggested to you, you will have changed the atmosphere and will have prepared the ground for the next step.

"There is much I should yet like to say. But my heart is heavy. I have already taken up much of your time. I have yet to say a few words in English also. I thank you for the patience and attention with which you have listened to me even at this late hour. It is just what true soldiers would do. For the last twenty-two years, I have controlled my speech and pen and have stored up my energy. He is a true brahmachari who does not fritter away his energy. He will therefore, always control his speech. That has been my conscious effort all these years. But today the occasion has come when I had to unburden my heart before you. I have done so, even though it meant putting a strain on your patience; and I do not regret having done it. I have given you my message and through you I have delivered it to the whole of India."

Thereafter, Gandhi spoke in English:

"I have taken such an inordinately long time over pouring out what was agitating my soul to those whom I had just now the privilege of serving. I have been called their leader or, in the military language, their commander. But I don't look at my position in that light. I have no weapon but love to wield my authority over anyone. I do sport a stick which you can break into bits without the slightest exertion. It is simply my staff with the help of which I walk. Such a cripple is not elated, when he is called upon to bear the greatest burden. You can share that burden only when I appear before you not as your commander but as a humble servant. And he who serves best is the chief among equals.

"Therefore, I was bound to share with you such thoughts as were welling up in my breast, and tell you, in as summary a manner as I can, what I expect you to do as the first step.

"Let me tell you at the outset that the real struggle does not commence today. I have yet to go through much ceremonial as I always do. The burden is almost unbearable, and I have got to continue to reason in those circles with whom I have lost my credit

for the time being. I know that in the course of the last few weeks I have forfeited my credit with a large number of friends, so much so, that some of them have now begun to doubt not only my wisdom but even my honesty. Now I hold that my wisdom is not such a treasure which I cannot afford to lose; but my honesty is a precious treasure to me and I can ill afford to lose it.

"Such occasions arise in the life of a man who is a pure seeker after truth and who would seek to serve humanity and his country to the best of his lights, without fear or hypocrisy. For the last fifty years, I have known no other way. I have been a humble servant of humanity and, have rendered on more than one occasion such service as I could to the empire; and here let me say without fear of challenge that throughout my career never have I asked for any personal favour. I have enjoyed the privilege of friendship, as I enjoy it today, with Lord Linlithgow. It is a friendship which has outgrown the official relationship. Whether Lord Linlithgow will bear me out I do not know; but there has sprung up a personal bond between him and myself. He once introduced me to his daughter. His son-in-law, the A.D.C., was drawn towards me. He fell in love with Mahadev more than with me, and Lady Anne and he came to me. She is an obedient and favourite daughter. I take interest in their welfare. I take the liberty to give out these titbits only to give you an earnest of the personal bond which exists between us. And yet, let me declare here that no personal bond will ever interfere with the stubborn struggle on which, if it falls to my lot, I may have to launch against Lord Linlithgow, as the representative of the empire. It seems to me that I will have to resist the might of that empire with the might of the dumb millions, with no limit but of non-violence as policy confined to this struggle. It is a terrible job to have to offer resistance to a Viceroy with whom I enjoy such relations. He has more than once trusted my word, often about my people. I mention this with great pride and pleasure. I mention it as an earnest of my desire to be true to the British nation, to be true to the empire. I mention it to testify that when that empire forfeited my trust, the Englishman who was its Viceroy came to know it.

"Then there is the sacred memory of Charlie Andrews which wells up within me at this moment. The spirit of Andrews hovers about me. For me, he sums up the brightest tradition of English culture. I enjoyed closer relations with him than with most Indians.

I enjoyed his confidence. There were no secrets between us. We exchanged our hearts everyday. Whatever was in his heart he would blurt out without the slightest hesitation or reservation. It is true he was a friend of Gurudev, but he looked upon Gurudev with awe, not that Gurudev wanted it. Andrews had that peculiar humility. But with me, he became the closest friend. Years ago, he came to South Africa with a note of introduction from the late Gokhale. He is unfortunately gone. He was a fine Englishman. I know that the spirit of Andrews is listening to me.

"Then I have received a warm telegram from the Metropolitan of Calcutta, Dr. Westcott, conveying his blessings, though, I know, he is opposed to my move today. I hold him to be a man of God. I can understand the language of his heart; I know that his heart is with me.

"And with this background, I want to declare to the world that, whatever may be said to the contrary, and although I might have forfeited the regard and even the trust of many friends in the West, and I bow my head low, but even for their friendship or their love, I must not suppress the voice within, call it 'conscience', call it the 'prompting of my inner basic nature'. There is something within me impelling me to cry out my agony. I have known humanity. I have studied something of psychology, though I have not read many books on psychology. Such a man knows exactly what it is. That something in me which never deceives me tells me now: 'You have to stand against the whole world, although you may have to stand alone. You have to stare the world in the face, although the world may look at you with bloodshot eyes. Do not fear. Trust that little thing which resides in the heart.' It says, 'Forsake friends, wife, and all; but testify to that for which you have lived, and for which you have to die.'

"Believe me, friends, I am not anxious to die. I want to live my full span of life. According to me, it is 120 years at least. By that time India will be free, the world will be free. Let me tell you too that I do not regard England, or for that matter America, as free countries. They are free after their own fashion, free to hold in bondage the coloured races of the earth. Are England and America fighting for the liberty of these races today? You shall not limit my concept of freedom. The English and the American teachers, their history and their magnificent poetry have not said you shall not

broaden the interpretation of freedom. And according to my interpretation of that freedom, I am constrained to say they are strangers to that freedom which their poets and teachers have described. If they will know the real freedom, they should come to India. They have to come not with pride or arrogance but in the spirit of earnest seekers of Truth.

"It is the fundamental truth with which India has been experimenting for twenty-two years. Unconsciously, from its very foundations, long ago, the Congress has departed though non-violently from what is known as the constitutional method. Dadabhai and Pherozshah who held the Congress India in the palm of their hands had held on to the latter. They were lovers of the Congress. They were its masters. But above all, they were real servants. They never countenanced murder and secrecy and the like. I confess there are many black sheep amongst us Congressmen. But I trust the whole of India to launch upon a non-violent struggle on the widest scale. I trust the innate goodness of human nature which perceives the truth and prevails during a crisis, as if by instinct. But, even if I am deceived in this, I shall not swerve. From its very inception, the Congress based its policy on peaceful methods and the subsequent generations added non-co-operation. When Dadabhai entered the British Parliament, Salisbury dubbed him as a black man, but the English people defeated Salisbury, and Dadabhai went to Parliament by their vote. India was delirious with joy. These things, however, now India has outgrown.

"It is with all these things as the background that I want the Englishmen, Europeans and all the United Nations to examine in their heart of hearts what crime India has committed in demanding independence today. I ask: Is it right for you to distrust us? Is it right to distrust such an organization with all its background, tradition and record of over half a century and misrepresent its endeavours before all the world by every means at your command? Is it right, I ask, that by hook or by crook, aided by the foreign press, aided, I hope not, by the President of the U.S.A., or even by the Generalissimo of China, who has yet to win his laurels, you should present India's struggle in shocking light?

"I have met the Generalissimo. I have known him through Madame Chiang who was my interpreter, and though he seemed inscrutable to me, not so Madame Chiang. And he allowed me to

read his mind through her. He has not as yet said that we were wrong in demanding our independence. There is a chorus of disapproval and protest all over the world against us. They say we are erring, the move is inopportune. I had great regard for the British, but now the British diplomacy stinks in my nostrils. Yet others are learning their lessons. They may succeed in getting, through these methods, the world opinion on their side for a time; but India will raise her voice against all the organized propaganda. I will speak against it. Even if the whole of the world forsakes me, I will say: 'You are wrong. India will wrench with non-violence her liberty from unwilling hands.'

"Even if my eyes close and there is no freedom for India, non-violence will not end. They will be dealing a mortal blow to China and Russia if they oppose the freedom of non-violent India which today is pleading with bended knees for the fulfilment of the debt long overdue. Does a creditor ever go to the debtor like that? And even when India is met with such angry opposition, she says: 'We will not hit below the belt. We have learnt sufficient gentlemanliness. We are pledged to non-violence.' I have been the author of the non-embarrassment policy of the Congress and yet today you find me talking this strong language. My non-embarrassment plea was always qualified by the proviso 'consistent with our honour and safety'. If a man holds me by the neck and wants to drown me, may I not struggle to free myself directly? There is no inconsistency in our position today.

"There are representatives of the foreign press assembled here today. Through them, I wish to say to the world that the United Nations, who say that they have need for India, have the opportunity now to declare India free and prove their bona fides. If they miss it, they will be missing the opportunity of their lifetime and history will record that they did not discharge their obligations to India in time and lost the battle. I want the blessings of the whole world, so that I may succeed with them. I do not want the united powers to go beyond their obvious limitations. I do not want them to accept non-violence and disarm today. There is a fundamental difference between fascism and even this imperialism which I am fighting. Do the British get from India all they want? What they get today is from the India which they hold in bondage. Think what difference it would make if India was to participate as a free ally.

That freedom, if it is to come, must come today. It will have no taste left in it, if today, you, who have the power to help, do not exercise it. If you can exercise it, what seems impossible today will, under the glow of freedom, become possible tomorrow. If India feels that freedom, she will command that freedom for China. The road for running to Russia's help will be opened. The Englishmen did not die in Malaya or on the soil of Burma. What shall enable us to retrieve this situation? Where shall I go and where shall I take the forty crores of India? How is this vast mass of humanity to be aflame in the cause of world deliverance, unless and until it has touched and felt freedom? Today, they have no touch of life left. It has been crushed out of them. If lustre is to be put into their eyes, freedom has to come not tomorrow but today. I have, therefore, pledged the Congress, and the Congress has pledged herself that she will do or die."

President Azad, winding up the proceedings, stated that he was addressing the United Nations on the Congress demand and would strive till the last minute to reach a settlement. The A.-I.C.C. session concluded at ten in the night.

Do Or Die

1942

AUGUST 8, 1942, the last day of freedom, was crowded with intense work. Replying to a *News Chronicle* editorial, Gandhi said in an interview:

"Peace I want among all mankind, but I do not want peace at any cost, and certainly not by placating the aggressor or at the cost of honour. Anyone, therefore, who thinks that I am guilty of either vice will do great harm to the immediate purpose.

"The resolution is intended to compass the very end which the article in question has at heart. We here feel that Britain cannot be extricated from its critical position, unless India's hearty co-operation is secured. That co-operation is impossible without the people realizing that they are independent today. And the people have to act swiftly, if they are to retain the independence regained after an insufferable period of foreign domination. No one can change the nature of a whole mass of mankind by promises, when the reality is the indispensable requisite for energizing them.

"The resolution has provided for the difficulty that the framers could anticipate. They have accounted for every valid criticism, and I can say on behalf of the Congress that it would at any time be prepared to consider and make allowance for any valid difficulty. No one responsible has even taken the trouble of discussing with the Working Committee of the Congress the difficulty there is about the immediate recognition of India's independence.

"The Congress consent to the military operations of the allied arms during the pendency of the war supplies a sufficient answer to any difficulty that we could conceive. The British or the allies run no risk in recognizing independence. The risk is all on the side of India, but the Congress is prepared to take it. Not only the British run no risk so far as the conduct of the war is concerned, but they gain by this one act of justice an ally, counting 400 millions, and

accession of strength that is derived from a consciousness of having done that justice. Then, and then only, could Great Britain be distinguished from Nazis and fascists only by that act and no other. It, therefore, passes my comprehension that such justice is denied by those who proclaim their allegiance to freedom and democracy."

In an interview to the Associated Press, he replied to a number of questions on the Congress resolution.

Question: "Does this resolution mean peace or war? There is an interpretation, particularly among the foreign journalists, that it means declaration of war, and that the last three paragraphs of the resolution are the really operative part. Is the emphasis on the first part or the last part of the resolution?"

Answer: "The emphasis in any non-violent struggle, projected or in operation, is always on peace; war, when it becomes an absolute necessity."

Question: "Do you contemplate negotiations between the Congress and British Government before launching mass struggle?"

Answer: "I have definitely contemplated an interval between the passing of the Congress resolution and the starting of the struggle. I do not know that what I contemplate doing according to my wont can be in any way described as in the nature of the negotiation. But a letter will certainly go to the Viceroy not as an ultimatum, but an earnest pleading for avoiding conflict. If there is favourable response, then my letter can be the basis for negotiation."

Question: "What is the maximum time you are prepared to wait to see if there is any response from the British Government and the United Nations to 'the last-minute appeal' of the A.-I.C.C.?"

Answer: "The object with which the demand for the immediate withdrawal is made does not allow of a long-time interval for the simple reason that the war will not be suspended while, in expectation of something turning up, the interval is contemplated. The Working Committee itself, which is sincerely eager to mobilize the whole of free Indian opinion in favour of the war effort, is impatient to do so and in view of the terrible suspense created throughout India it is altogether wrong both for the Congress and British power to prolong the suspense by a day longer than is warranted by force of circumstances beyond control."

Replying to the questions by foreign correspondents, Gandhi further elucidated points from the Congress resolution. An American

correspondent asked: "America seems disturbed about your position relative to Japan. Would you give us a point-blank assurance that even if there was a time when you thought of dealing with Japan you would not consider it now?"

Gandhi answered: "I can give no such assurance, because if I deal with Japan and if I am allowed to do so by the contemplated free India government, I would do so purely in interest of the allied cause. It may be the effort and optimism of a visionary, but it can do no harm to the war effort. It will discredit Japan, if a friendly gesture on behalf of groaning humanity is repelled. I have no doubt in my mind that if the allied powers had found someone whom they could implicitly trust not to compromise their cause, they would not reject such a voluntary offer in which they would, in no sense, be involved in the sense that they had sent an emissary to make overtures on their behalf. I have enough regard for my self-respect, not to handle a mission of a compromising nature. But I know this is only a day-dream on my part. Independence has first to come and then I must have the permission of the free India Government which will, as a new ally, seek the approval of the United Nations for my humanitarian mission."

Question: "Would any sort of assurance of post-war freedom be acceptable to you?"

Answer: "For the very cogent reasons I have given and many Congressmen have given, for the cause itself of the United Nations, waiting is harmful. The attainment of independence after the war would lose its charm. India would not feel that it had made any real effort to win independence and it must be humiliating for a big nation like India not to be able to help, although it is conscious that it can render inestimable help in a variety of ways such, that I have repeatedly said, that it would ensure victory for the allied cause. Critics will never understand the urgency and, if I may say so, the delicate nobility of the demand, unless they understand and appreciate the background I have given to everyone of the recent acts of the Congress."

Question: "Can you outline some non-violent step to be taken, so that we can plainly tell America just how tough you can make things over here?"

Answer: "Your question is certainly very good. I could answer it also, but my modesty will prevent it. I must, therefore, ask the

impatient Americans to wait and see. I would plead with them to suppress their natural curiosity and also mobilize public opinion, so that they may derive themselves the experience of the toughness of non-violent action of the extreme type."

Question: "Civil disobedience will inevitably hamper the United Nations' war effort—which you say you do not want to do—how quickly do you think you can win, and is not a complete general strike necessary for such speed?"

Answer: "Whether people believe it or not, I must confess that in non-violent action God is the decisive factor. Whatever strength I possess is not my own. Every ounce of it comes from God of truth who does not dwell in the clouds above, but who dwells in every fibre of my being. Therefore, it is very difficult for me to speak with precision of, say, General Wavell, who thinks, as he must, that his dispositions and calculations must be such, and can be made such, that they cannot be overridden by any such unknown and intangible power called God or Truth, or whatever other name human fancy chooses to give to that power. You are right, however, when you say that for a swift ending a general strike is necessary. It is not outside my contemplation, but seeing that I shall take every step in terms of my oft-repeated declaration that mass struggle is not conceived in any inimical spirit, but in the friendliest spirit, I shall move with utmost caution. And if a general strike becomes a dire necessity, I shall not flinch."

On August 7, Gandhi placed the following draft of instructions, marked "confidential", before the Working Committee:

"On the day of the hartal, no processions should be taken out, nor meetings held in the cities. All people should observe a twenty-four hours' fast and offer prayers. If the owners of shops approve of our satyagraha struggle, they will close their shops, but no one should be made to close his shop under coercion. In the villages, however, where there is no fear of violence or disturbance, meetings may be held and processions taken out and responsible Congressmen who believe in mass civil disobedience should explain the meaning of the contemplated satyagraha struggle to the people. The object of our satyagraha is to secure the withdrawal of British rule and the attainment of independence for the whole of India. After the withdrawal of British rule, the constitution of the future government of the country will be settled by the joint deliberation

of the whole nation, including all parties. That government will belong not to the Congress nor to any particular group or any party, but to the entire thirty-five crores of people of India. All Congressmen should make it clear that it will not be the rule of the Hindus or of any particular community. It should also be well explained that this satyagraha is not directed against Englishmen but against British rule only, for we regard no one as our enemy. This should be brought home to villagers.

"Local Congress workers should send their reports about the hartal and other activities to their provincial Congress committees and the latter to the central Congress office. In case, the leader in a particular place is arrested by the Government, another should be chosen in his place. Every province would make necessary arrangements suited to its particular circumstances. And in the last resort, every Congressman is his own leader and a servant of the whole nation. A final word: no one should think that those whose names are on the Congress register are the only Congressmen. Let every Indian, who desires the freedom for the whole of India and fully believes in the weapon of truth and non-violence for the purpose of this struggle, regard himself as a Congressman and act as such. If anybody has the spirit of communalism or harbours hatred or ill will in his heart against any Indian or Englishman, he will best help the struggle by keeping aloof. Such an individual will hinder the cause by joining the struggle.

"Every satyagrahi should understand before joining the struggle that he is to ceaselessly carry on the struggle till independence is achieved. He should vow that he will be free or die. Those employed in Government offices, Government factories, railways, post offices, etc., may not participate in the hartal, because our object is to make it clear that we will never tolerate the Japanese, Nazi or fascist invasion, nor British rule. Therefore, we shall not for the present interfere in the above-mentioned Government departments. But an occasion may certainly arise, when we shall ask all those people who are employed in Government offices to give up their positions and join the satyagraha struggle. But all Congress members in the central and provincial assemblies ought to vacate their seats and come out forthwith. In case, an attempt is made to fill their places with enemies of the country's freedom, or henchmen of the British Government, local Congressmen should be put up to oppose their

election. The same applies to the Congress members of the municipalities and other public bodies. As conditions in different provinces are not the same, every provincial Congress committee shall make arrangements suited to its special circumstances.

"If a Government servant is called upon to perpetrate excesses or injustice, it will be his clear duty to resign at once, giving the real reasons. The free Indian Government will be under no obligation to continue in its service all those Government functionaries who are at present serving the empire on huge salaries; nor will it be under an obligation to continue the large pensions which are being drawn at present.

"All students reading in institutions conducted or controlled by the Government should come out of these institutions. Those who are above sixteen years of age should join the satyagraha. Those who so leave these institutions should do so with a clear understanding that they are not to return to them until independence is achieved. There should be no coercion whatsoever in this matter. Only those who of their own free will wish to do so should come out. No good can come out of coercion.

"If excesses are committed in any place by the Government, people should offer resistance and endure the penalty. For instance, if villagers, labourers or householders are ordered to vacate their farms or homes, they should flatly refuse to obey such orders. If an adequate compensation is offered, or if they are suitably provided for by grant of land, etc., elsewhere, they may vacate their farms or homes. Here there is no question of civil disobedience, but simply of refusing to submit to coercion or injustice. We do not want to hinder military activities, but neither shall we submit to arbitrary high-handedness.

"The salt tax causes great hardship to the poor. Therefore, wherever salt can be made, the poor people may certainly manufacture it for themselves and risk the penalty.

"Land tax is due only to a government which we recognize as our own. It is long since we have mentally ceased to recognize the existing Government as such, but until now we have not gone to the length of refusing the payment of land tax because we felt that the country was not prepared to go so far. But the time has now come when those, who have the courage, and are prepared to risk their all should refuse to pay it. The Congress holds that the land

belongs to those who work on it and to no one else. If they part with a share of the produce to anyone, it is for the furtherance of their own interests. There are various systems of collecting land revenue. Where the zamindari system prevails the zamindars pay the tax to the Government and the ryot to the zamindar. In such cases, if the zamindar makes common cause with the ryot, his portion of the revenue, which may be settled by mutual agreement, should be given to him. But if a zamindar wants to side with the Government, no tax should be payed to him. This will, in the immediate present, spell ruin to the ryot. Therefore, only those who are prepared to face utter ruin should refuse payment of land revenue.

"Besides these, there are several other items which could be taken up. The directions in regard to these items will be issued when the occasion arises."

The Working Committee was again to have met on the morning of August 9. Gandhi was to put before the committee his view of the negotiations which he was to carry on with the Government. The negotiations were to cover a period of at least three weeks. The instructions were to see the light of day only on failure of the contemplated negotiations.

Gandhi made supreme effort to settle amicably with the Muslim League. On August 8, Gandhi wrote to a Muslim business man in Bombay that he had no objection to Britain handing over power to the Muslim League, "provided the Muslim League co-operated fully with the Congress demand for immediate independence without the slightest reservation, subject, of course, to the proviso that independent India will permit the operations of the allied armies in order to check Axis aggression."

Immediately after the passing of the resolution by the A.-I.C.C., the Governor-General-in-Council published on August 8 a resolution expressing regret at the Congress resolution and determination to meet the "challenge" contained in it:

"The Governor-General-in-Council has been aware, too, for some days past of the dangerous preparations by the Congress party for unlawful and, in some cases, violent activities directed among other things to the interruption of communications and public utility services, organization of strikes, tampering with the loyalty of the Government servants and interference with defence measures including recruitment. The Government of India have waited patiently

in the hope that wise counsels might prevail. They have been disappointed in that hope. To a challenge, such as the present, there can be only one answer. The Government of India would regard it as wholly incompatible with their responsibilities to the people of India and their obligations to the allies, that a demand should be discussed, the acceptance of which would plunge India into confusion and anarchy internally, and would paralyse India's effort in the common cause of human freedom."

On Sunday, August 9, Gandhi woke up as usual at four in the morning for his prayers. There had been rumours to the effect that arrests were imminent. "After my last night's speech," said Gandhi to Mahadev Desai, "they will never arrest me." He was about to proceed with his daily routine after the prayers, when the news came that the Police Commissioner was at the gate of Birla House and wanted to see Gandhi's secretary. He brought with him warrants of arrest and detention under the Defence of India Rules for Gandhi, Mahadev Desai and Mirabehn. There were no orders for Kasturbai Gandhi and Pyarelal, but the Police Commissioner said he had instructions to take them with Gandhi under the same terms if they chose to accompany him. But they decided not to. The police gave Gandhi and his party half an hour to get ready. Gandhi took his usual breakfast of goat's milk and fruit juice. His favourite hymn "Vaishnav Jan" was then sung by his party and also verses from the Koran. Gandhi then left with a few personal belongings including his copy of the Gita, the ashram hymn book, the Koran, an Urdu primer and his *dhanush takli.*

Gandhi's last instructions conveyed to the nation through Pyarelal were: "Let every non-violent soldier of freedom write out the slogan 'Do or Die' on a piece of paper or cloth, and stick it on his clothes, so that in case he died in the course of offering satyagraha, he might be distinguished by that sign from other elements who do not subscribe to non-violence."

A special train was kept ready at the Victoria Terminus station. The whole of the Working Committee and many Congressmen had already been taken into it in the early hours of the morning. What happened later was described by Mahadev Desai in his diary:

"We were taken down at Chinchwad. The Working Committee members were made to get down first. In the course of a conversation with the Maulana and Jawahar a reference came up as to

a fast. They recognized it as a final step. Jawahar raised the point as to why secrecy was incompatible with ahimsa. 'You are free to interpret ahimsa in your own way,' replied Bapu.

"At Chinchwad station we were taken into a motor-car. Others were made to go into a lorry. Sorrow and grief were written large on Bapu's face. It was accentuated by the way in which Mehta was treated. They caught hold of Mehta by his hands and feet and carried him to the lorry where a sergeant pushed him in.

"On reaching the palace, I began to give Bapu a massage. 'After how many long years are you doing it?' Bapu asked. He slept for one and a half hours during the massage and again at noon. He then began writing the letter to the Viceroy which he showed to me at night. But my eyes were heavy with sleep. At 9.25 a.m. Bapu took silence."

Serious disturbances had broken out all over India when news of arrests became known. The detention of the Working Committee had been followed by the arrests of hundreds of Congress leaders throughout the country. The destination of the Working Committee was kept a secret, while it was known that Gandhi and his party were confined in Aga Khan Palace at Poona. Soon after Kasturbai joined Gandhi by insisting upon addressing a meeting in Bombay. She narrated to him the happenings outside in detail.

On August 10, Gandhi addressed a letter to Sir Roger Lumley, the Governor of Bombay:

"After the train that carried me and the fellow prisoners reached Chinchwad on Sunday, some of us were ordered to alight. Shrimati Sarojini Devi, Shrimati Mirabai, Shri Mahadev Desai and I were directed to get into a car. There were two lorries lined up alongside the car. I have no doubt that the reservation of the car for us was done out of delicate considerations. I must own too that the officers in charge performed their task with tact and courtesy.

"Nevertheless, I felt deeply humiliated, when the fellow prisoners were ordered to occupy the two lorries. I realize that all could not be carried in cars. I have been before now carried in prison vans. This time too, we should have been carried with our comrades. In relating this incident, my object is to inform the Government that in the altered conditions and the altered state of my mind, I can no longer accept special privileges which hitherto I have accepted, though reluctantly. I propose this time to accept no privileges

and comforts which comrades may not receive, except for the special food, so long as the Government allow it for my bodily need.

"There is another matter to which I must draw your attention. I have told my people that this time our method is not courting imprisonment, that we must prepare for much higher sacrifice and so those who choose may peacefully resist arrest. So a young man, who was in the party, offered such resistance. He was, therefore, hauled to the prison van. This was ugly enough. But it was a painful sight when an impatient English sergeant rough-handled him and shoved him into the lorry, as if he was a log of wood. In my opinion, the sergeant deserves correction. The struggle has become bitter enough without such scenes.

"This temporary jail is commodious enough to take in all who were arrested with me. Among them are Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and his daughter. She is his nurse and cook. I have great anxiety about the Sardar who never got over the intestinal collapse which he had during his last incarceration. Ever since his release, I have been personally regulating his diet, etc. I request that both he and his daughter be placed with me. And so should the other prisoners though not on the same imperative grounds as are applicable in the case of the Sardar and his daughter. I submit that it is not right to separate co-workers arrested for the same cause, unless they are dangerous criminals.

"I have been told by the superintendent that I am not to be supplied with the newspapers. Now, I was given by one of my fellow prisoners on the train a copy of the Sunday edition of the *Evening News*. It contains the Government of India's resolution in justification of their policy in dealing with this crisis. It contains some grossly incorrect statements which I ought to be allowed to correct. This and similar things I cannot do, unless I know what is going on outside the jail."

Secretary to the Government of Bombay said that "no change in the conditions of your detention is at present contemplated, and it is not at present the intention to supply you with newspapers."

On August 14, Gandhi sent to the Viceroy the following letter:

"The Government of India were wrong in precipitating the crisis. The Government resolution justifying the step is full of distortions and misrepresentations. That you had the approval of your Indian 'colleagues' can have no significance, except this that in India you

can always command such services. That co-operation is an additional justification for the demand of withdrawal, irrespective of what people and parties may say.

"The Government of India should have waited at least till the time that I inaugurated the mass action. I had publicly stated that I fully contemplated sending you a letter before taking concrete action. It was to be an appeal to you for an impartial examination of the Congress case. As you know, the Congress has readily filled in every omission that has been discovered in the conception of its demand. So would I have dealt with every deficiency, if you had given me the opportunity. The precipitate action of Government leads one to think that they were afraid that the extreme caution and the gradualness with which the Congress was moving towards direct action, might make the world opinion veer round to the Congress as it had already begun doing, and expose the hollowness of grounds for the Government rejection of the Congress demand. They should surely have waited for an authentic report of my speeches on Friday and on Saturday night after the passing of the resolution by the A.-I.C.C. You would have found in them that I would not hastily begin action. You should have taken advantage of the interval foreshadowed in them and explored every possibility of satisfying the Congress demand.

"The resolution says: 'The Government of India have waited patiently in the hope that wiser counsels might prevail. They have been disappointed in that hope.' I suppose 'wiser counsels' here mean the abandonment of its demand by the Congress. Why should the abandonment of a demand legitimate at all times be hoped for by a Government pledged to guarantee independence to India? Is it a challenge that could only be met by immediate repression, instead of patient reasoning with the demanding party? I venture to suggest that it is a long draft upon the credulity of mankind to say that the acceptance of the demand 'would plunge India into confusion.' Anyway the summary rejection of the demand has plunged the nation and the Government into confusion. The Congress was making every effort to identify India with the allied cause.

"The Government resolution states: 'The Governor-General-in-Council has been aware, too, for some time past, of dangerous preparations by the Congress party for unlawful and, in some cases, violent activities, directed among other things to the interruption

of communications and public utility services, the organization of strikes, tampering with the loyalty of Government servants and interference with the defence measures, including recruitment.' This is a gross distortion of the reality. Violence was never contemplated at any stage. A definition of what could be included in non-violent action has been interpreted in a sinister and subtle manner as if the Congress was preparing for violent action. Everything was openly discussed among the Congress circles, for nothing was to be done secretly. And why is it tampering with your loyalty, if I ask you to give up a job that is harming the British people? Instead of publishing behind the backs of principal Congressmen the misleading paragraph, the Government of India, immediately they came to know of 'the preparations', should have brought to book the parties concerned with the preparations. That would have been an appropriate course. By their unsupported allegations in the resolution, they have laid themselves open to the charge of unfair dealing.

"The whole Congress movement was intended to evoke in the people the measure of sacrifice sufficient to compel attention. It was intended to demonstrate what measure of popular support it had. Was it wise at this time of the day to seek to suppress a popular movement avowedly non-violent?

"The Government resolution further says: 'The Congress is not India's mouthpiece. Yet in the interests of securing their own dominance and in pursuit of their totalitarian policy, Congress leaders have consistently impeded the efforts made to bring India to full nationhood.' It is a gross libel thus to accuse the oldest national organization of India. This language lies ill in the mouth of a Government which has, as can be proved from the public records, consistently thwarted every national effort for attaining freedom, and sought to suppress the Congress by hook or by crook.

"The Government have not condescended to consider the Congress offer that if simultaneously with the declaration of independence of India, they could not trust the Congress to form a stable provisional government, they should ask the Muslim League to do so and that any national government formed by the League would be loyally accepted by the Congress. Such an offer is hardly consistent with the charge of totalitarianism against the Congress.

"Let me examine the Government offer. 'It is that as soon as hostilities cease, India shall devise for herself, with full freedom of

decision and on a basis embracing all and not only a single party, the form of government, which she regards as most suited to her conditions.' Has this offer any reality about it? All parties have not agreed now. Will it be any more possible after the war, if the parties have to act before independence is in their hands? Parties grow up like mushrooms, for without proving their representative character, the Government will welcome them as they have done in the past, if the parties oppose the Congress and its activities, though they may do lip-homage to independence. Frustration is inherent in the Government offer. Hence, the logical cry of withdrawal first. Only after the end of the British power and fundamental change in the political status of India from bondage to freedom, will the formation of a truly representative government, whether provisional or permanent, be possible. The living burial of the authors of the demand has not resolved the deadlock. It has aggravated it.

"Then the resolution proceeds: 'The suggestion put forward by the Congress party that the millions of India uncertain as to the future are ready, despite the sad lessons of so many martyr countries, to throw themselves into the arms of the invaders, is one that the Government of India cannot accept as a true representation of the feeling of the people of this great country.' I do not know about the millions. But I can give my own evidence in support of the Congress statement. It is open to the Government not to believe the Congress evidence. No imperial power likes to be told that it is in peril. It is because the Congress is anxious for Britain to avoid the fate that has overtaken other imperial powers that it asks her to shed imperialism voluntarily by declaring India independent. The Congress has not approached the movement with any but the friendliest motive. The Congress seeks to kill imperialism as much for the sake of the British people and humanity as for India. Notwithstanding the assertions to the contrary, I maintain that the Congress has no interest of its own apart from that of the whole of India and the world.

"The following passage from the peroration in the resolution is interesting. 'But on them (the Government), there lies the task of defending India, of maintaining India's capacity to wage war, of safeguarding India's interests, of holding the balance between the different sections of her people without fear or favour.' All I can say is that it is a mockery of truth after the experience in Malaya,

Singapore and Burma. It is sad to find the Government of India claiming to hold the 'balance' between the parties for whose creation and existence it is itself demonstrably responsible.

"One thing more. The declared cause is common between the Government of India and us. To put it in most concrete terms, it is the protection of the freedom of China and Russia. The Government think that the freedom of India is not necessary for winning the cause. I think exactly the opposite. I have taken Jawaharlal Nehru as my measuring rod. His personal contacts make him feel much more the misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia than I can, and, may I say, than even you can. In that misery, he tried to forget his quarrel with imperialism. He dreads much more than I do the success of Nazism and fascism. I argued with him for days together. He fought against my position with a passion which I have no words to describe. But the logic of facts overwhelmed him. He yielded when he saw clearly that without the freedom of India that of the other two was in great jeopardy. Surely, you are wrong in having imprisoned such a powerful friend and ally.

"If notwithstanding the common cause, the Government's reply to the Congress demand is hasty repression, they will not wonder if I draw the inference that it was not so much the allied cause that weighed with the British Government, as the unexpressed determination to cling to the possession of India as an indispensable part of imperial policy. This determination led to the rejection of the Congress demand and precipitated repression.

"The present mutual slaughter on a scale never before known to history is suffocating enough. But the slaughter of truth accompanying the butchery and enforced by the falsity of which the resolution is reeking adds strength to the Congress position.

"It causes me deep pain to have to send you this letter. But however much I dislike your action, I remain the same friend you have known me. I would still plead for a reconsideration of the Government of India's whole policy. Do not disregard this pleading of one who claims to be sincere friend of the British people.

"Heaven guide you!"

The Viceroy curtly replied that "it would not be possible for me either to accept the criticisms which you advance of the resolution of the Governor-General-in-Council, or your request that the whole policy of the Government of India should be reconsidered."

The country was ruled by ordinances. The Working Committee, the A.-I.C.C. and the provincial Congress committees, except in the N.-W. Frontier Province were banned. On August 9, there were disturbances in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Poona. On August 10, disturbances occurred in Delhi and in quite a few towns in the United Provinces. Slowly the movement began to spread and manifest itself in different ways apart from hartals, protest meetings and similar demonstrations. The closing of shops and restaurants was forbidden by a new Defence of India Rule. By another addition to the rules, the Government of India empowered the provincial governments to supersede the local authority in enforcing law and order and for the maintenance of supply and essential services. Yet another order of the Central Government prohibited the "printing or publishing, by any printer, publisher or editor, of any factual news including reports of speeches or statements by members of the public, relating to the mass movement sanctioned by the A.-I.C.C. or to the measures taken by the Government against that movement, except news derived from official sources, or the Associated Press of India, the United Press of India, or a correspondent regularly employed by the newspaper concerned. The source of information shall also be stated in the newspaper publishing such news."

Explaining the limits within which the reports of the movement might be published, a communique, dated August 10, said:

"The declaration of various Congress committees to be unlawful associations renders liable to prosecution under the Criminal Law Amendment Act anyone who assists their operations. It therefore follows—and this is a matter with regard to which, in the circumstances, no previous warning to the press or consultation with the advisory committees was possible—that the editor of any newspaper who supports or encourages the mass movement sponsored by the bodies referred to above, or who opposes the measures taken by the Government to avert or suppress that movement, will be guilty of an offence against law. It is undeniable that publication of factual news, both by the selection of events reported and by the manner in which they are displayed, can do even more to advertise, and thus support the movement than editorial comment thereon."

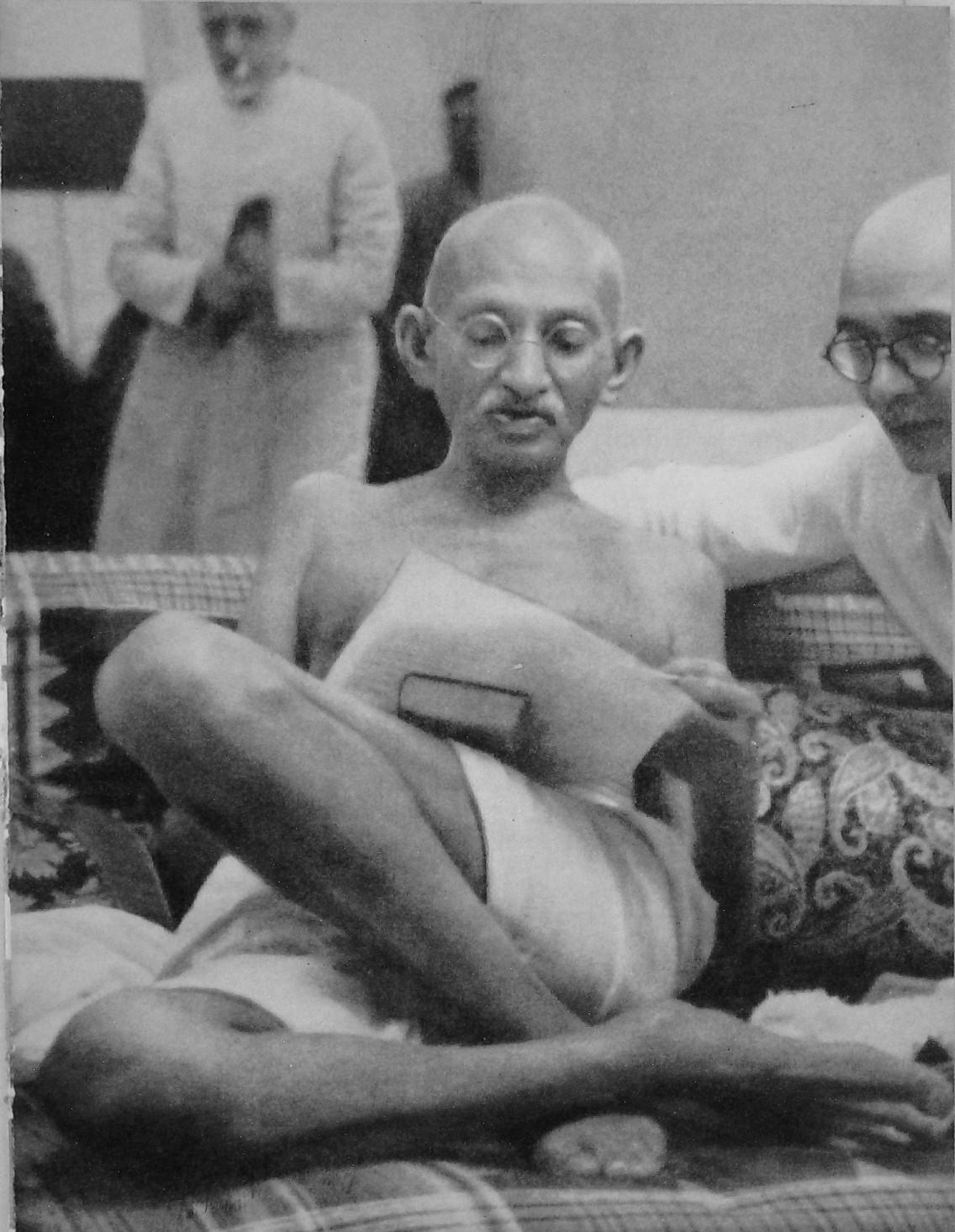
Severe restrictions on the publication of news led to temporary suspensions of many papers. *National Herald* of Lucknow and *Harijan* were closed down for the duration of the struggle.

Within a week of detention at Aga Khan Palace, Gandhi suffered a grievous bereavement. He lost Mahadev Desai, his faithful and able secretary who had served him nearly thirty-five years without any rest and who had "reduced himself to zero". On the morning of August 15, he died of heart attack. Gandhi stood by the bedside calling out, 'Mahadev, Mahadev'. In anguish, Gandhi said, "If he only opens his eyes and looks at me once, he won't go." Mahadev never opened his eyes. With trembling hands, Gandhi washed the body and annointed it with sandal and decorated it with flowers whispering, "Mahadev, I thought you would do this for me. Now I have to do it for you."

The authorities had brought a lorry with police and Brahmins. They wanted to take away the body and cremate it. But Gandhi would not have it. "No father can hand over the body of his son to strangers," he said. "Mahadev was more than a son to me. I would like to perform his last rites myself. But if the Government cannot take me outside, I am prepared to hand it over to friends, but I won't hand it over to the jail officials." Although the Government hand over the bodies of murderers to their relatives and their friends after hanging and let them have a public funeral, they were not prepared to allow such a thing for a rebel, however non-violent. There was tenseness in the atmosphere. Gandhi sat thinking for a moment. Then he said: "I do not want to make the death of my son into a political issue. If Government will not allow me to go out and cremate the body nor hand it over to friends, I will have the cremation here." The jail authorities got in touch with Delhi on telephone. The Government ultimately yielded.

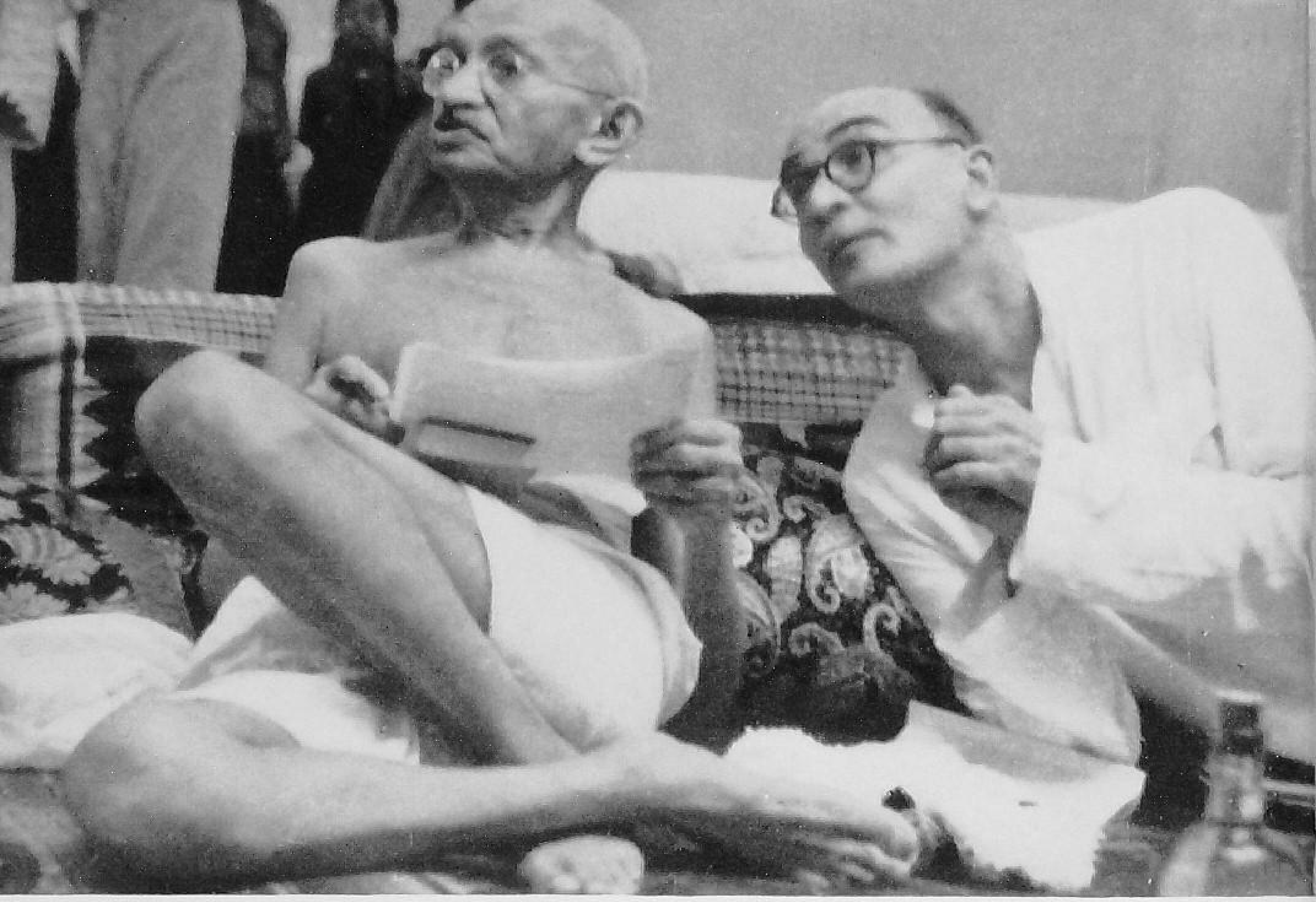
In the afternoon, a mournful little procession followed Mahadev's bier to the improvised burning ground in a corner of the palace grounds. Gandhi followed the body with a staff in one hand and a pot of fire in the other. After a short religious ceremony, Gandhi lighted the fire and soon there was a blaze. "Mahadev has lived up to the 'Do or Die' mantra," he asserted. "This sacrifice cannot but hasten the day of India's deliverance."

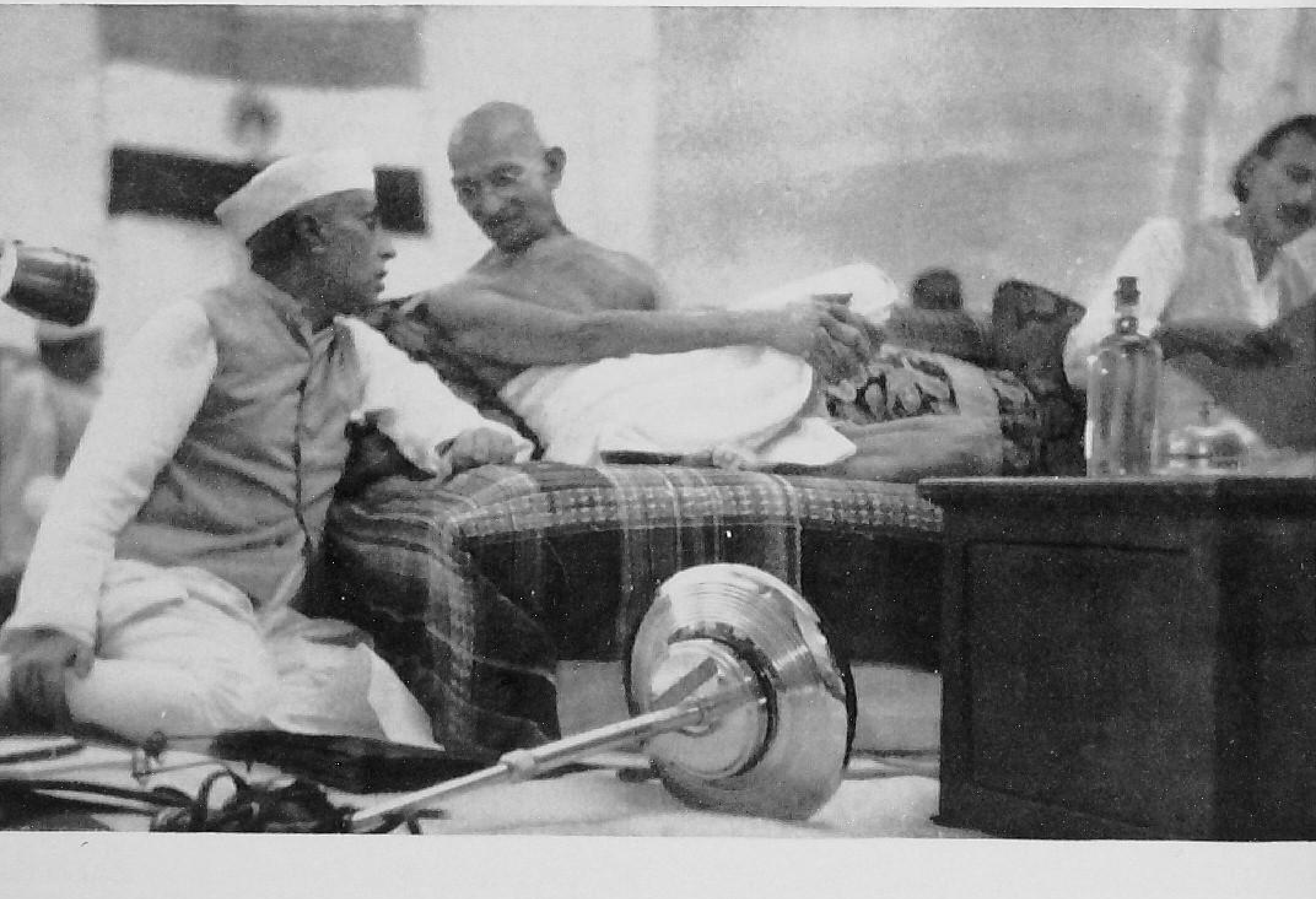
The Inspector-General of Prisons asked Gandhi if he would like to send a message to Mahadev's relatives. "Yes, I would like to send a telegram provided it is sent without mutilation," he said. He started dictating the telegram. He began, "Sorry". Then he stopped. "Why should I be sorry to announce such a noble death?



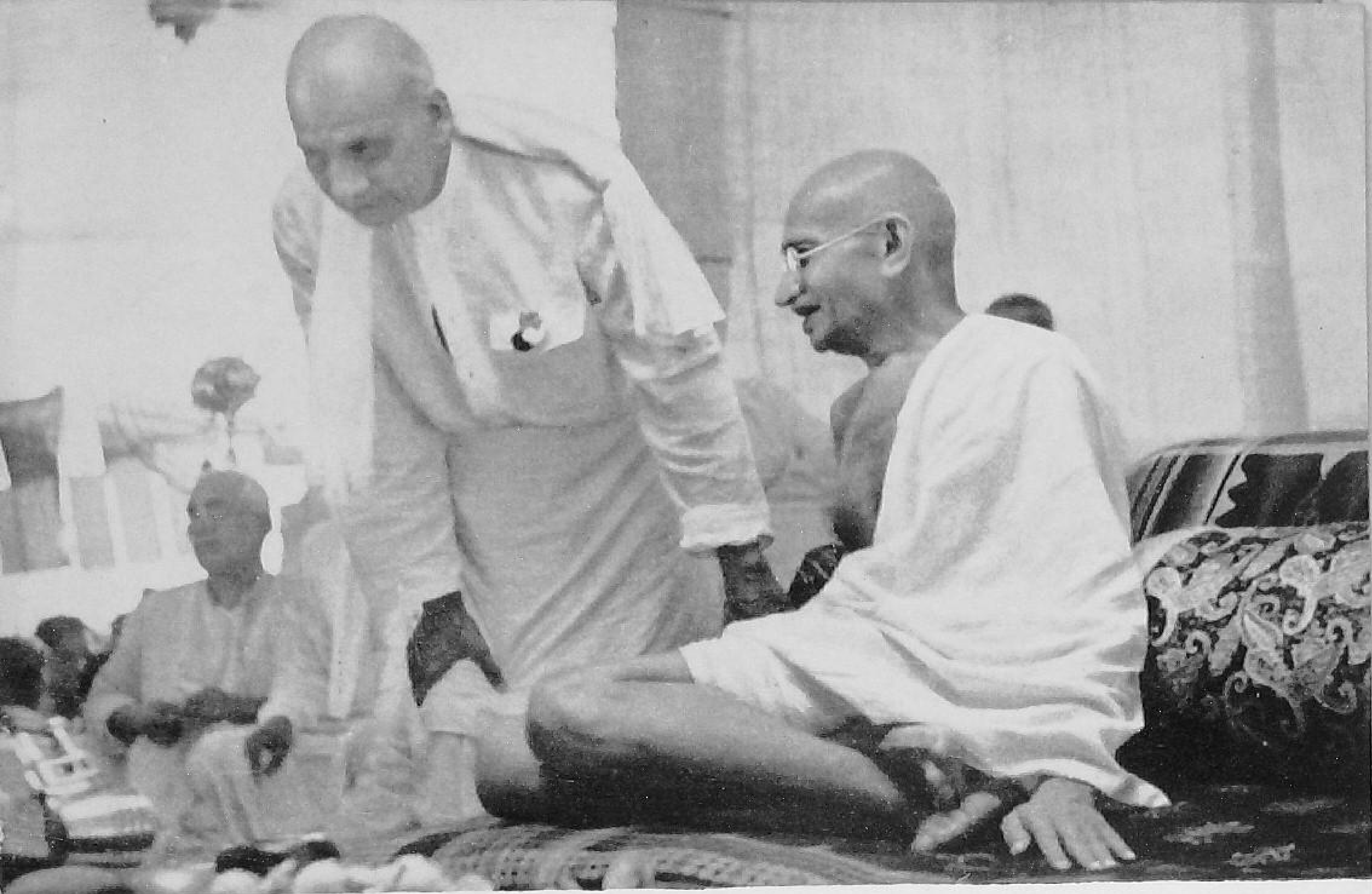
Photograph : Central Camera Co.

At the A.-I.C.C., Bombay, August 8, 1942



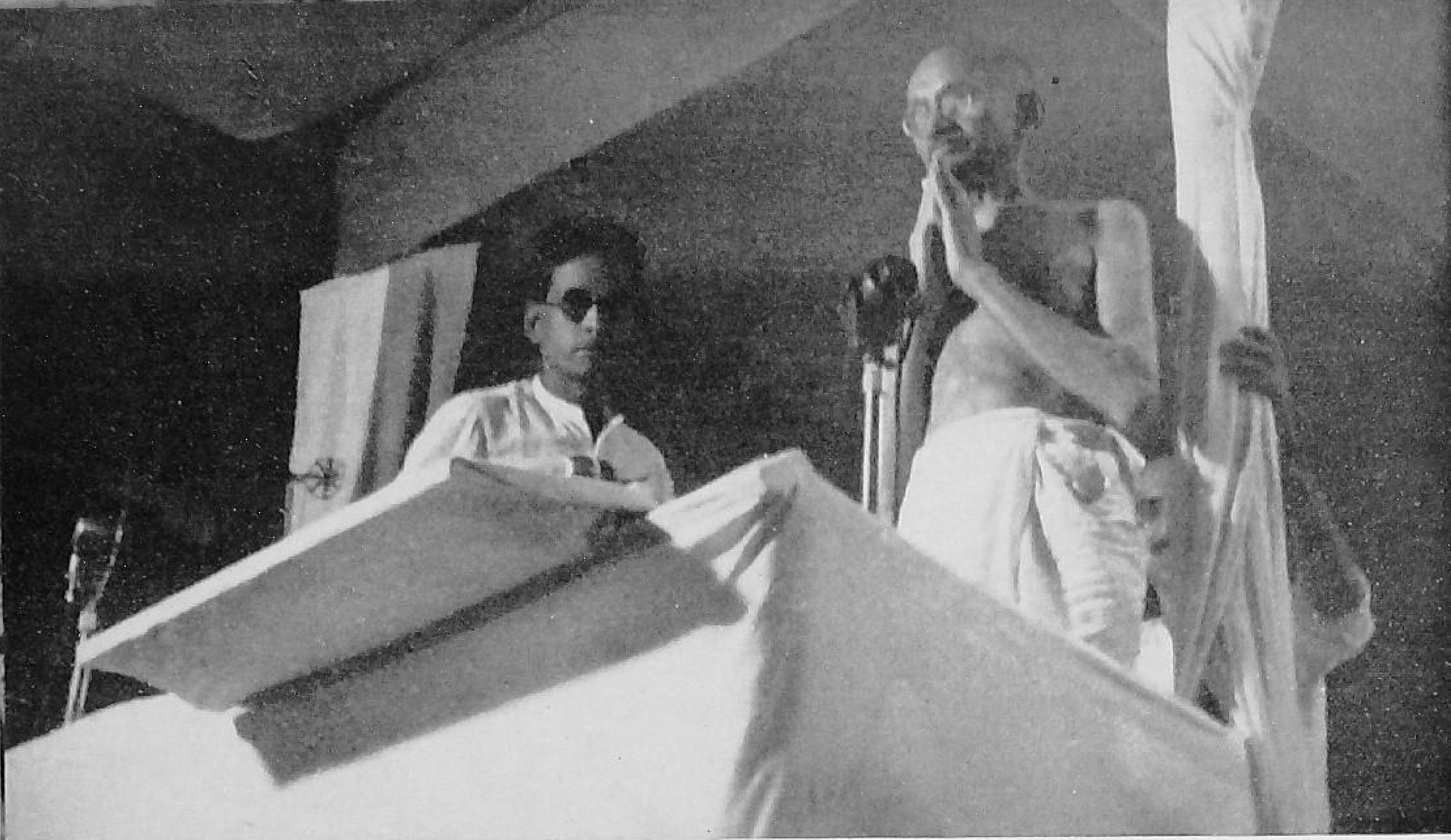


Gandhi with Mahadev Desai, Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru and



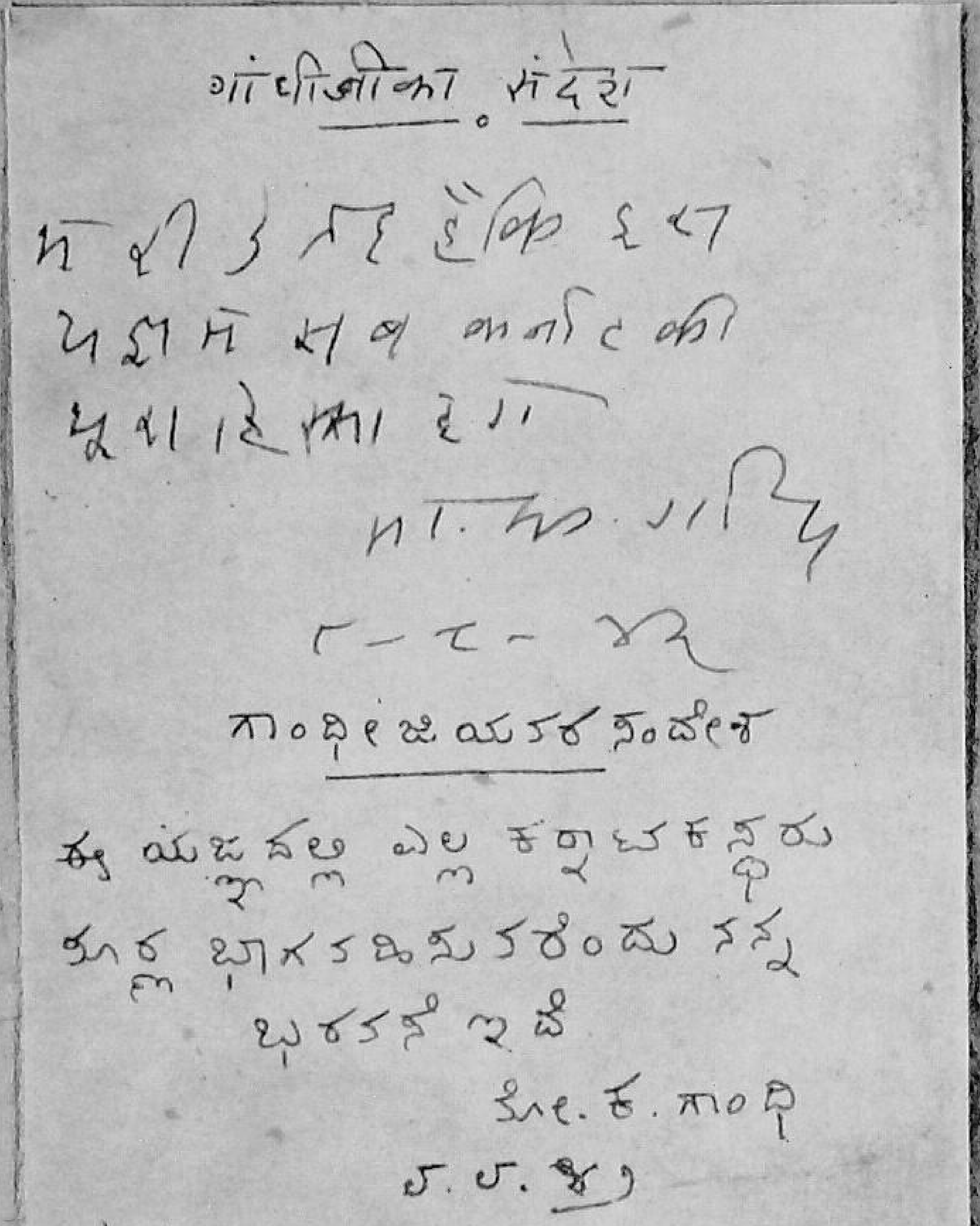
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu at the A.-I.C.C. meeting in Bombay, August 1942



Photograph : D. G. Tendulkar

Gandhi addressing the historic session of the A.-I.C.C., Bombay, August 1942


गांधीजीका संदेश

मुझे उम्मीद है कि इस लड़ाई में सब कर्नाटकी पूरा हिस्सा देंगे

मो. क. गांधि

८-८-४२

ಗಾಂಧೀಜಿಯವರ ಸಂದೇಶ

ಈ ಯುದ್ಧದಲ್ಲಿ ಎಲ್ಲ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದವರು ಪೂರ್ಣ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸುವರೆಂದು ನನ್ನ ಭರವಸೆ ಇದೆ.

ಮೋ. ಕ. ಗಾಂಧಿ

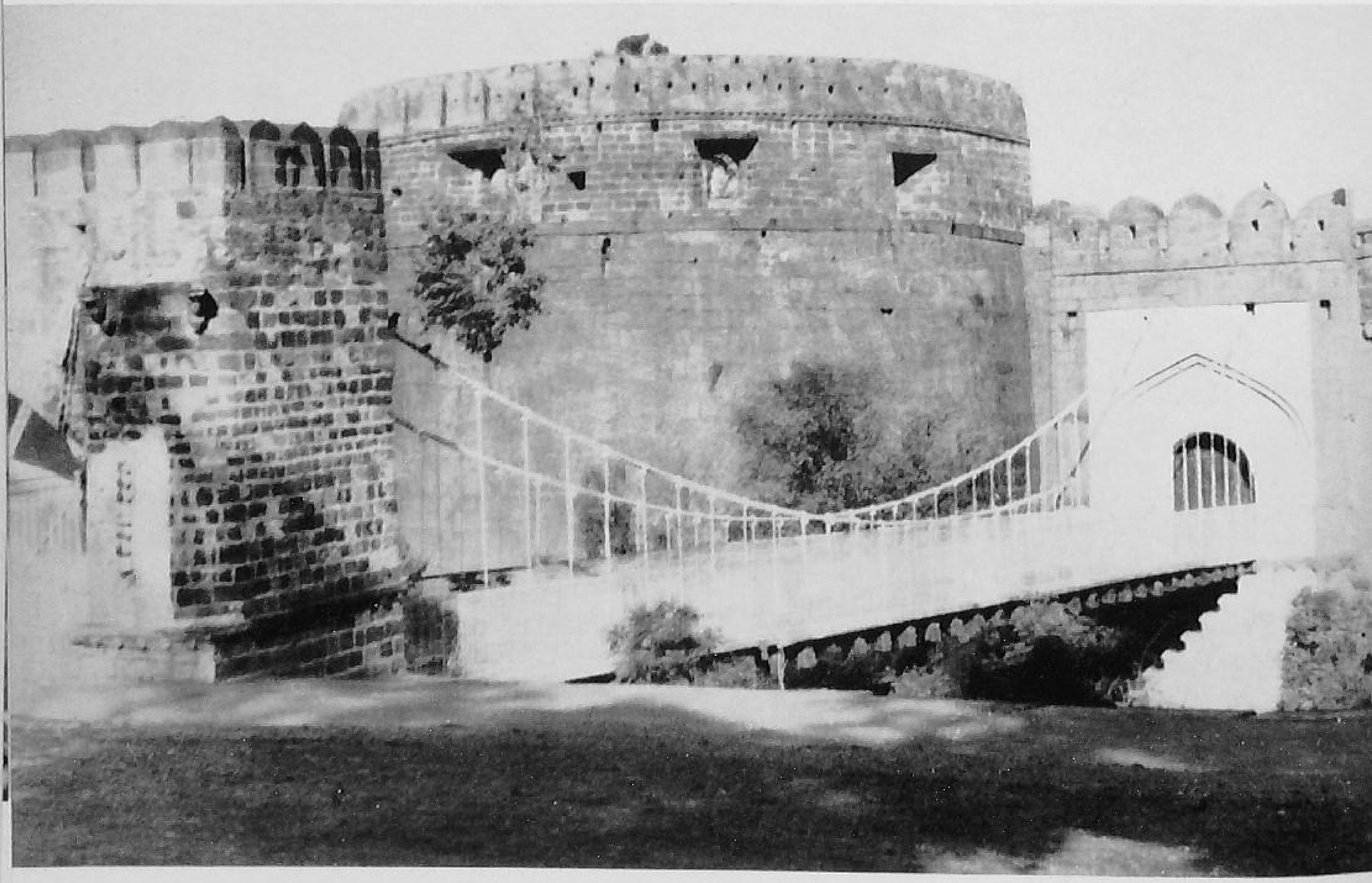
೮.೮.೪೨

करेंगे या मरेंगे – ಮಾಡುವೆ ಇಲ್ಲವೆ ಸಾಯುವೆ.

– ಗಾಂಧೀಜಿ

Courtesy : R. R. Diwakar

Gandhi's message of " Do or Die " to the people of Karnatak



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Aga Khan Palace, Poona, where Gandhi was confined
Ahmednagar Fort where the Working Committee members were detained

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Teargassing and shooting of the people during 1942

Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Samadhi of Mahadev Desai at Aga Khan Palace, Poona

No, scratch out 'sorry' and write, Mahadev died suddenly. Gave no indication. Slept well last night. Had breakfast. Walked with me. Sushila, jail doctors did all they could, but God had willed otherwise. Sushila and I bathed body. Body lying peacefully covered with flowers, incense burning. Sushila and I reciting Gita. Mahadev has died yogi's and patriot's death. Tell Durga, Babla and Sushila, no sorrow allowed. Only joy over such noble death. Cremation taking place front of me. Shall keep ashes. Advise Durga remain ashram, but she may go to her people if she must. Hope Babla will be brave and prepare himself fill Mahadev's place worthily. Love. Bapu."

The message was delivered to the Inspector-General of Prisons with a request to despatch it by express telegram. It was delivered to the addressee by post after three weeks' delay.

Bones and ashes were collected on the third day. A platform was erected on the site. A small enclosure of stones was made. Gandhi visited the *samadhi* every morning and evening. Fresh flowers were replaced and, in the morning, the twelfth chapter of the Gita was recited daily. "Mahadev's whole life was an uninterrupted song of *bhakti*," said Gandhi, "and it is only befitting that we should recite *Bhakti Yoga* at his *samadhi*. From being a disciple, he has become my teacher. I visit his *samadhi* every day in order to keep the example of his life-long dedication to service fresh in my mind. Let us all pray to God that we may be able to follow in his footsteps."

The news of Mahadev Desai's death stunned the country. The conclusion was natural that the arrested leaders were being cruelly treated. The muzzling of the press led to wild rumours and suspicion of the official communiques. It was the unlawful Congress radio speaking from "somewhere in India" which announced the news of many happenings concealed by the Government from the public. Labour strike in Ahmedabad, closing of Jamshedpur steel works, military occupation of the Benares Hindu University, air-bombing of Ballia, harrowing tales of repression in Midnapur, military excesses in Ashti and Chimur, firing and lathi charges all over India were not allowed to be published in the papers. The Congress radio stationed in Bombay and Congress bulletins kept the people informed of the happenings all over the country.

Protests against repression were frequent and there were spontaneous demonstrations. These were broken up and fired upon, tear-gas bombs were used, and all the usual channels of giving expression

to the public feelings were gagged. And then all these suppressed emotions broke out and crowds gathered in cities and rural areas and came in conflict with the police and the military. They attacked especially what seemed to them the symbols of the British rule and power, the police stations, post offices and railway stations; they cut the telegraph and telephone wires, they removed rails and damaged bridges. According to official statements, in the week immediately following the arrests, some 250 railway stations were damaged or destroyed, over 500 post offices were attacked. The railway system of Bihar and the eastern districts of the United Provinces was dislocated for many weeks. Trains ran very late and very slow, when they ran at all. Telegrams often took longer than letters to reach their destination. Communications were seriously interrupted over a large part of India. The cost of the destruction and disturbance was officially estimated at about rupees one crore.

Over 150 police stations were attacked, besides other government buildings. Over thirty members of the police force were killed, and a few other officials and soldiers. On the other side, the civilian casualties from August to November were over 900 killed according to official figures and many more injured. The unarmed and leaderless mobs faced the police and military firing, according to official statements, on 538 occasions, and they were also machine-gunned from low-flying aircraft. Whipping sentence was inflicted on 538 occasions. The collective fine imposed on villagers amounted to Rs. 90 lakhs, the bulk of which was promptly realized.

Over 60,000 persons had been arrested up to the end of 1942. The number of persons convicted was 26,000 and 18,000 persons had been detained under the Defence of India Rules. And thousands of Congress workers defied the police and went underground for many months.

For a month or two serious disturbances continued in some parts of the country and then dwindled away giving place to sporadic occurrences. "The disturbances," stated Churchill, "were crushed with all the weight of the Government. . . Larger reinforcements have reached India and the number of the white troops in that country is larger than at any time in the British connection." Referring to the movement he said, "it may be that these activities have been aided by the Japanese fifth-column work." He described the Congress as an insignificant party of the Hindus.

Many Indian leaders gave their verbal answer to this speech. By way of protest, Premier Allah Baksh of Sind renounced his titles and decorations. The Governor promptly dismissed him for "his recent renunciation of honours". Later, Churchill stated "Let me, however, make this clear, in case there should be any mistake about it in any quarter: We mean to hold our own. I have not become the King's first minister in order to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. For that task, if ever it were prescribed, some one else would have to be found and, under democracy, I suppose, the nation would have to be consulted."

By the end of August 1942, restrictions on the security prisoners were relaxed. They were permitted to send and receive letters from the members of their families only. The contents of letters were to be limited to personal and domestic matters. Gandhi was permitted to select such newspapers as he would like to see, including the past issues since his arrest. But he refused to avail himself of the facility to write letters on the terms dictated by the Government and he addressed the following to the Government of Bombay:

"With reference to the Government orders about the writing of letters by the security prisoners, it seems that the Government do not know that for over thirty-five years, I have ceased to live family life and I have been living, what has been called, the ashram life in association with persons who have more or less shared my views. Of these Mahadev Desai, whom I have just lost, was an associate beyond compare. His wife and his only son have lived with me for years sharing the ashram life. If I cannot write to the widow and her son or the other members of the deceased's family living in the ashram, I can have no interest in writing to any one else. Nor can I be confined to writing about personal and domestic matters. If I am permitted to write at all, I must give instructions about many matters that I had entrusted to the deceased. These have no connection with politics which are the least part of my activities. I am directing the affairs of the A.-I.S.A. and the kindred associations. Sevagram ashram itself has many activities of a social, educational and humanitarian character. I should be able to receive letters about these activities and write about them. There is the Andrews Memorial Fund. There is a large sum lying at my disposal. I should be able to give instructions about its disposal. To this end, I must be in correspondence with the people at Santiniketan. Pyarelal who

was co-secretary with Mahadev Desai and whose company as also that of my wife was offered to me at the time of my arrest has not yet been sent. I have asked the I.G.P. about his whereabouts. I can get no information about him, nor about Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who was under my care for the control of his intestinal trouble. If I may not correspond with them about their health and welfare, again the permission granted can have no meaning for me."

On September 23, Gandhi addressed the following letter to the Secretary to the Government of India, giving his personal reaction to the happenings in the country:

"In spite of the chorus of approval sung by the Indian councillors and others, of the Government policy in dealing with the Congress, I venture to assert that had the Government but awaited at least my contemplated letter to H. E. the Viceroy and the result thereafter, no calamity would have overtaken the country. The reported deplorable destruction would have most certainly been avoided.

"In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, I claim that the Congress policy still remains unequivocally non-violent. The wholesale arrests of the Congress leaders seemed to have made the people wild with rage to the point of losing self-control. I feel that the Government, not the Congress, are responsible for the destruction that has taken place. The only right course for the Government seems to me to be to release the leaders, to withdraw all repressive measures and explore ways and means of conciliation. Surely the Government have ample resources to deal with any overt act of violence. Repression can only breed discontent and bitterness.

"Since I am permitted to receive newspapers, I feel that I owe it to the Government to give my reaction to the sad happenings in the country. If the Government think that as a prisoner I have no right to address such communications, they have but to say so and I will not repeat the mistake."

The Government did not respond to his letter. They wanted no compromise with him. "Gandhism and all it stands for will have to be grappled with and finally crushed," had said Churchill. At the very outset, Navajivan Press was seized and all numbers of *Harijan*, old and new, were confiscated and destroyed. When Gandhi asked for an explanation from the Government of Bombay, he was told: "The Government instructed the District Magistrate, Ahmedabad, to destroy all objectionable literature from Navajivan Press such

as the old copies of the *Harijan* newspaper, books, leaflets and other miscellaneous papers . . . All the old files of *Harijan* since 1933 have been destroyed."

By the end of September, the Government had apparently succeeded in crushing both the non-violent and the violent attempts to compel them to quit India. The efforts of Rajagopalachari, Tej Bahadur Sapru, Shyama Prosad Mookerjee and the others to contact Gandhi failed. Explaining the policy of the British Government, Mr. Amery said:

"There can be no question of the Government of India entering into negotiations with them or allowing others to do so, so long as there is a danger of recrudescence of troubles for which they have been responsible or until they made it clear to the authorities that they have abandoned their whole policy to control India by illegal and revolutionary methods and are prepared to come to an agreed settlement with ourselves and their fellow-countrymen. There is no prospect of appeasement of the Congress in its present mood and outlook. That would only create greater difficulties with the Muslims and other parties. Above all, it would be regarded as a direct betrayal by the army, the police and the civil service who have played so steadfast a part in the troubles and upon whom the whole safety of India and the fate of the allied cause so largely depends."

A strict censorship cast an iron curtain over India. Repression continued. In November, Bhansali, an inmate of Sevagram ashram, undertook a fast to attract public attention and force an official inquiry over Chimur excesses. When Gandhi came to learn about it, he pleaded with the Government to grant him telegraphic contact with Bhansali. "I would like to dissuade him if I find his fast morally unjustified. I make this request for humanity's sake."

The Government turned down Gandhi's request and suggested: "If, however, you desire to advise him, for humanitarian reasons, to abandon his fast, this Government will make arrangements to communicate your advice to him."

"I note with deep regret," replied Gandhi, "that my telegraphic message with regard to a dear co-worker, whose life seems to be in jeopardy, should have been answered by a letter which reached me ten days after the despatch of my message. I am sorry for the Government rejection of my request. As I believe in the legitimacy and even necessity of fasting under given circumstances, I am unable

to advise abandonment of Professor Bhansali's fast, unless I know that he has no justifying reason for it. If the newspaper report is to be believed, there seems to be legitimate ground for his fast and I must be content to lose my friend, if I must."

On December 31, 1942 Gandhi addressed a letter written in his own hand to Lord Linlithgow from "Detention Camp":

"This is a very personal letter. Contrary to the Biblical injunction I have allowed many suns to set on a quarrel I have harboured against you. But I must not allow the old year to expire without disburdening myself of what is rankling in my breast against you. I have thought we were friends and should still love to think so. However, what has happened since the 9th of August last makes me wonder whether you still regard me as a friend. I have perhaps not come in such close touch with any occupant of your *gadi*, as with you.

"Your arrest of me, and the communique you issued thereafter, your reply to Rajaji and the reasons given therefor, Mr. Amery's attack on me, and much else I can catalogue go to show that at some stage or other you must have suspected my bona fides. Mention of other Congressmen in the same connection is by the way. I seem to be the *fons et origo* of all the evil imputed to the Congress. If I have not ceased to be your friend, why did you not, before taking drastic action, send for me, tell me of your suspicions and make yourself sure of your facts?

"I am quite capable of seeing myself as others see me. But in this case, I have failed hopelessly. I find that all the statements made about me in the Government quarters in this connection contain palpable departures from truth.

"I have so much fallen from grace that I could not establish contact with a dying friend. I mean Professor Bhansali, who is fasting in regard to the Chimur affair !!!

"And I am expected to condemn the so-called violence of some people reputed to be Congressmen, although I have no data for such condemnation save the heavily censored reports of the newspapers. I must own that I thoroughly distrust those reports. I could write much more, but I must not lengthen my tale of woe. I am sure, what I have said is enough to enable you to fill in details.

"You know I returned to India from South Africa at the end of 1914 with a mission which came to me in 1906, namely, to spread

truth and non-violence among mankind in place of violence and falsehood in all walks of life. The law of satyagraha knows no defeat. Prison is one of the many ways of spreading the message. But it has its limits. You have placed me in a palace where every reasonable creature comfort is ensured. I have freely partaken of the comfort purely as a matter of duty, never as a pleasure, in the hope that some day those who have the power will realize that they have wronged innocent men. I had given myself six months. The law of satyagraha, as I know it, prescribes a remedy in such moments of trial. In a sentence it is, 'Crucify the flesh by fasting.' That same law forbids its use, except as a last resort. I do not want to use it, if I can avoid it.

"This is a way to avoid it. Convince me of my errors, and I shall make ample amends. You can send for me or send someone who knows your mind and can carry convictions. There are many other ways if you have the will.

"May I expect an early reply?

"May the New Year bring peace to us all!"

Epic Fast

1943

In response to Gandhi's letter, Lord Linlithgow, replied as follows on January 13, 1943:

"Thank you for your personal letter of December 31st, which I have just received. I fully accept its personal character, and I welcome its frankness. And my reply will be, as you would wish it to be, as frank and as entirely personal as your letter itself.

"I was glad to have your letter, for, to be as open with you as our previous relations justify, I have been profoundly depressed during recent months first, by the policy that was adopted by the Congress in August, secondly, because while that policy gave rise, as it was obvious it must, throughout the country to violence and crime (I say nothing of the risks to India from outside aggression) no word of condemnation for that violence and crime should have come from you, or from the Working Committee. When you were first at Poona I know that you were not receiving newspapers, and I accepted that as explaining your silence. When the arrangements were made that you and the Working Committee should have such newspapers as you desired, I felt certain that the details newspapers contained of what was happening would shock and distress you, as much as it has us all, and that you would be anxious to make your condemnation of it categorical and widely known. But that was not the case; and it has been a real disappointment to me, all the more when I think of these murders, the burning alive of police officials, the wrecking of trains, the destruction of property, the misleading of these young students, which has done so much harm to India's good name, and to the Congress party. You may take it from me that the newspaper accounts you mention are well founded—I only wish they were not, for the story is a bad one. I well know the immense weight of your great authority in the Congress movement and with the party and those who follow its lead, and I wish I could

feel, again speaking very frankly, that a heavy responsibility did not rest on you. (And unhappily, while the initial responsibility rests with the leaders, others have to bear the consequences, whether as law breakers, or as the victims.)

"But if I am right in reading your letter to mean that in the light of what has happened you wish now to retrace your steps and dissociate yourself from the policy of last summer, you have only to let me know and I will at once consider the matter further. And if I have failed to understand your object, you must not hesitate to let me know without delay in what respect I have done so, and tell me what positive suggestion you wish to put to me. You know me well enough after these many years to believe that I shall be only too concerned to read with the same close attention, as ever, any message which I receive from you, to give it the fullest weight and to approach it with the deepest anxiety to understand your feelings and your motives."

On January 19, Gandhi replied:

"I received your kind letter of 13th instant yesterday at 2.30 p.m. I had almost despaired of ever hearing from you. Please excuse my impatience.

"Your letter gladdens me to find that I have not lost caste with you.

"My letter of 31st December was a growl against you. Yours is a counter growl. It means that you maintain that you were right in arresting me and you were sorry for the omissions of which, in your opinion, I was guilty.

"The inference you draw from my letter is, I am afraid, not correct. I have re-read my letter in the light of your interpretation, but have failed to find your meaning in it. I wanted to fast and I should still want to, if nothing comes out of our correspondence and I have to be a helpless witness to what is now going on in the country, including the privations of the millions owing to the universal scarcity stalking the land.

"If I do not accept your interpretation of my letter, you want me to make a positive suggestion. This, I might be able to do, only if you put me among the members of the Working Committee of the Congress.

"If I could be convinced of my error or worse, of which you are evidently, I should need to consult nobody, so far as my own action

is concerned, to make a full and open confession and make ample amends. But I have not any conviction of error. I wonder if you saw my letter to the Secretary to the Government of India of the 23rd September 1942. I adhere to what I have said in it and in my letter to you of the 14th August 1942.

"Of course, I deplore the happenings that have taken place since 9th August. But have I not laid the whole blame for them at the door of the Government of India? Moreover, I could not express any opinion on events which I cannot influence or control and of which I have but a one-sided account. You are bound *prima facie* to accept the accuracy of reports that may be placed before you by your departmental heads. But you will not expect me to do so. Such reports have, before now, often proved fallible. It was for that reason that, in my letter of 31st December, I pleaded with you to convince me of the correctness of information on which your conviction was based. You will perhaps appreciate my fundamental difficulty in making the statement you have expected me to make.

"This, however, I can say from the house-top, that I am as confirmed a believer in non-violence as I have ever been. You may not know that any violence on the part of the Congress workers, I have condemned openly and unequivocally. And I have even done public penance more than once. I must not weary you with the examples. The point I wish to make is that on every such occasion, I was a free man.

"This time retracing, as I have submitted, lies with the Government. You will forgive me for expressing an opinion challenging yours. I am certain that nothing but good would have resulted, if you had stayed your hand and granted me the interview which I had announced, on the night of the 8th August, I was to seek. But that was not to be.

"Here, may I remind you that the Government of India have before now owned their mistakes, as for instance, in the Punjab, when the late General Dyer was condemned, in the U.P. when a corner of a mosque in Cawnpore was restored, and in Bengal when the partition was annulled. All these things were done in spite of great and previous mob violence.

"To sum up:

"(1) If you want me to act singly, convince me that I was wrong and I will make ample amends.

"(2) If you want me to make a proposal on behalf of the Congress you should put me among the Working Committee members.

"I plead with you to make up your mind to end the impasse.

"If I am obscure or have not answered your letter fully, please point out the omissions and I shall make an attempt to give you satisfaction.

"I have no mental reservation.

"I find that my letters to you are sent through the Government of Bombay. This procedure must involve some loss of time. As time is of the essence in this matter, perhaps you will issue instructions that my letters to you may be sent directly by the superintendent of this camp."

In course of a letter dated January 25, the Viceroy wrote:

"I made clear to you in my last letter that, however reluctantly, the course of events, and my familiarity with what has been taking place, has left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement, and you as its authorized and fully empowered spokesman at the time of the decision of last August, as responsible for the sad campaign of violence and crime, and the revolutionary activity which has done so much harm, and so much injury to India's credit, since last August. I note what you say about non-violence. I am very glad to read your unequivocal condemnation of violence, and I am well aware of the importance which you have given to that article of your creed in the past. But the events of these last months, and even the events that are happening today, show that it has not met with the full support of certain, at any rate, of your followers, and the mere fact that they may have fallen short of an ideal which you have advocated is no answer to the relations of those who have lost their lives, and to those themselves who have lost their property or suffered severe injury as a result of violent activities on the part of the Congress and its supporters. And I cannot, I fear, accept as an answer your suggestion that 'the whole blame' has been laid by you yourself at the door of the Government of India. We are dealing with facts in this matter, and they have to be faced. And while, as I made clear in my last letter, I am very anxious to have from you anything that you may have to say or any specific proposition that you may have to make, the position remains that it is not the Government of India, but Congress and yourself that are on their justification in this matter.

"If, therefore, you are anxious to inform me that you repudiate or dissociate yourself from the resolution of the 9th August and the policy which that resolution represents, and if you can give me the appropriate assurances as regards the future, I shall, I need not say, be very ready to consider the matter further. It is, of course, very necessary to be clear on that point, and you will not, I know, take it amiss, that I should make that very clear in the plainest possible words.

"I will ask the Governor of Bombay to arrange that any communication from you should be sent through him, which will I trust reduce delay in its transmission."

On January 29, Gandhi communicated to the Viceroy his decision to fast:

"I wish I could agree with you that your letter is clear. I am sure you do not wish to imply by clearness simply that you hold a particular opinion strongly. I have pleaded and would continue to plead till the last breath that you should at least make an attempt to convince me of the validity of the opinion you hold, that the August resolution of the Congress is responsible for the popular violence that broke out on the 9th August and after, even though it broke out after the wholesale arrests of principal Congress workers. Was not the drastic and unwarranted action of the Government responsible for the reported violence? You have not even said what part of the August resolution is bad or offensive in your opinion. That resolution is in no way a retraction by the Congress of its policy of non-violence. It is definitely against fascism in every shape or form. It tenders co-operation in the war effort under circumstances which alone can make effective and nation-wide co-operation possible.

"The Government have evidently ignored or overlooked the very material fact that the Congress, by its August resolution, asked nothing for itself. All its demands were for the whole people. As you should be aware, the Congress was willing and was prepared for the Government inviting Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah to form a national government, subject to such agreed adjustments as may be necessary for the duration of the war, such government being responsible to a duly elected assembly. Being isolated from the Working Committee, except Shrimati Sarojini Devi, I do not know its present mind. But the committee is not likely to have changed its mind.

"Is all this open to reproach?

"Objection may be raised to that clause of the resolution which contemplated civil disobedience. But that by itself cannot constitute an objection, since the principle of civil disobedience is impliedly conceded in what is known as 'Gandhi-Irwin Pact'. Even that civil disobedience was not to be started before knowing the result of the meeting for which I was to seek from you an appointment.

"Then, take the unproved and, in my opinion, the unprovable charges hurled against the Congress and me by so responsible a minister as the Secretary of State for India.

"Surely I can say with safety that it is for the Government to justify their action by solid evidence, not by mere *ipse dixit.*

"But you throw in my face the facts of murders by persons reputed to be Congressmen. I see the fact of the murders as clearly, I hope, as you do. My answer is that the Government goaded the people to the point of madness. They started leonine violence in the shape of the arrests already referred to. That violence is not any the less so, because it is organized on a scale so gigantic that it displaces the Mosaic law of tooth for tooth by that of ten thousand for one—not to mention the corollary of the Mosaic law, that is, of non-resistance as enunciated by Jesus Christ. I cannot interpret in any other manner the repressive measures of the all-powerful Government of India.

"Add to this tale of woe, the privations of poor millions due to India-wide scarcity which I cannot help thinking might have been largely mitigated, if not altogether prevented, had there been a bona fide national government responsible to a popularly elected assembly.

"If then I cannot get soothing balm for my pain, I must resort to the law prescribed for the satyagrahis, namely, a fast according to capacity. I must commence after the early morning breakfast of the 9th February a fast for twenty-one days ending on the morning of the 2nd March. Usually, during my fasts, I take water with the addition of salts. But nowadays, my system refuses water. This time, therefore, I propose to add juices of citrus fruits to make the water drinkable. For, my wish is not to fast unto death, but to survive the ordeal, if God so wills. The fast can be ended sooner by the Government giving the needed relief.

"I am not marking this letter personal, as I did the two previous ones. Those were in no way confidential. Those were mere personal appeal."

On February 5, the Viceroy wrote:

"... In my last letter I said that my knowledge of the facts left me no choice but to regard the Congress movement, and you as its authorized and fully empowered leader at the time of decision of last August, as responsible for the campaign of violence and crime that subsequently broke out. In reply, you have reiterated your request that I should attempt to convince you that my opinion is correct. I would readily have responded earlier to that request were it not that your letters gave no indication, such as I should have been entitled to expect, that you sought the information with an open mind. In each of them you have expressed profound distrust of the published reports of the recent happenings, although in your last letter, on the basis of the same information, you have not hesitated to lay the whole blame for them on the Government of India. In the same letter you have stated that I cannot expect you to accept the accuracy of the official reports on which I rely. It is not, therefore, clear to me how you expect or even desire me to convince you of anything. But in fact, the Government of India have never made any secret of their reasons for holding the Congress and its leaders responsible for the deplorable acts of violence and sabotage and terrorism that have occurred since the Congress resolution of the 8th August declared a 'mass struggle' in support of its demands, appointed you as its leader and authorized all the Congressmen to act for themselves in the event of interference with the leadership of the movement. A body which passes a resolution in such terms is hardly entitled to disclaim responsibility for any events that follow it. There is evidence that you and your friends expected this policy to lead to violence; that you were prepared to condone it; and that the violence that ensued formed part of a concerted plan, conceived long before the arrest of Congress leaders. General nature of the case against the Congress has been publicly stated by the Home Member in his speech in the Central Legislative Assembly on the 15th September last, and if you need further information I would refer you to it. I enclose a complete copy in case the press versions that you must have seen were not sufficient. I need only add that all the mass of evidence that has come to light has confirmed the conclusions then reached. I have ample information that the campaign of sabotage has been conducted under secret instructions, circulated in the name of the A.-I.C.C.;

that well-known Congressmen have organized and freely taken part in acts of violence and murder; and that even now an underground Congress organization exists in which, among others, the wife of a member of the Working Committee plays a prominent part, and which is actively engaged in planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism that have disgusted the whole country. If we do not act on all this information or make it publicly known, it is because the time is not yet ripe; but you may rest assured that the charges against the Congress will have to be met sooner or later and it will then be for you and your colleagues to clear yourselves before the world, if you can. If in the meanwhile you yourself, by any action such as you now appear to be contemplating, attempt to find an easy way out, the judgement will go against you by default.

"I have read with surprise your statement that the principle of civil disobedience is implicitly conceded in the Delhi settlement of the 5th March 1931 which you refer to as the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. I have again looked at the document. Its basis was that civil disobedience would be 'effectively discontinued' and certain 'reciprocal action' would be taken by the Government. It was inherent in such a document that it should take notice of the existence of civil disobedience. But I can find nothing in it to suggest that civil disobedience was recognized as being in any circumstances legitimate. And I cannot make it too plain that it is not so regarded by my Government.

"To accept the point of view which you put forward would be to concede that the authorized Government of the country, on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, should allow subversive and revolutionary movements described by you yourself as open rebellion to take place unchallenged; that they should allow preparations for violence, for interruptions of communications, for attacks on innocent persons, for murder of the police officers and others to proceed unchecked. My Government and I are open, indeed, to the charge that we should have taken drastic action at an earlier stage against you and the Congress leaders. But my anxiety and that of my Government has throughout been to give you and to give the Congress organization, every possible opportunity to withdraw from the position which you have decided to take up. Your statements of last June and July, the original resolution of the Working Committee of July 14, and your declaration

on the same day that there was no room left for negotiation, and that after all it was an open rebellion are all of them grave and significant, even without your final exhortation to 'do or die'. But with a patience that was perhaps misplaced, it was decided to wait until the resolution of the A.-I.C.C. made it clear that there could be no further toleration of the Congress attitude if Government was to discharge its responsibility to the people of India.

"Let me in conclusion say how greatly I regret, having regard to your health and age, the decision that you tell me that you now have in your mind to take. I hope and pray that wiser counsels may yet prevail with you. But the decision whether or not to undertake a fast with its attendant risks is clearly one that must be taken by you alone and the responsibility for which and for its consequences must rest on you alone. I trust sincerely that in the light of what I have said you may think better of your resolution and I would welcome a decision on your part to think better of it, not only because of my natural reluctance to see you wilfully risk your life, but because I regard the use of a fast for political purposes as a form of political blackmail (*himsa*) for which there can be no moral justification, and understood from your own previous writings that this was also your view."

On February 7, Gandhi wrote to the Viceroy as follows:

"I would take your last point first, namely, the contemplated fast which begins on the 9th instant. Your letter, from a satyagrahi's standpoint, is an invitation to fast. No doubt the responsibility for the step and its consequences will be solely mine. You have allowed an expression to slip from your pen for which I was unprepared. In the concluding sentence of the second paragraph, you describe the step as an attempt 'to find an easy way out'. That you, as a friend, can impute such a base and cowardly motive to me passes comprehension. You have also described it as 'a form of political blackmail', and you quote my previous writings on the subject against me. I abide by my writings. I hold that there is nothing inconsistent in them with the contemplated step. I wonder whether you have yourself read those writings.

"I do claim that I approached you with an open mind, when I asked you to convince me of my error. A 'profound distrust' of the published reports is in no way inconsistent with my having an open mind.

"You say that there is evidence that I—I leave my friends out for the moment—'expected this policy to lead to violence', that I was 'prepared to condone it', and that 'the violence that ensued formed part of a concerted plan conceived long before the arrest of the Congress leaders'. I have seen no evidence in support of such a serious charge. You admit that part of the evidence has yet to be published. The speech of the Home Member, of which you have favoured me with a copy, may be taken as the opening speech of the prosecution counsel and nothing more. It contains unsupported imputations against Congressmen. Of course, he has described the violent outburst in graphic language. But he has not said why it took place when it did. I have suggested why it did. You have condemned men and women before trying them and hearing their defence. Surely, there was nothing wrong in my asking you to show me the evidence on which you hold them guilty. What you say in your letter carries no conviction. Proof should correspond to the canons of English jurisprudence.

"If the wife of a member of the Congress Working Committee is actively engaged in 'planning the bomb outrages and other acts of terrorism', she should be tried before a court of law and punished if found guilty. The lady you refer to could only have done the things attributed to her after the wholesale arrests of 9th August last which I have dared to describe as leonine violence.

"You say that the time is not yet ripe to publish the charges against the Congress. Have you ever thought of the possibility of their being found baseless when they are put before an impartial tribunal, or that some of the condemned persons might have died in the meanwhile, or that some of the evidence that the living can produce might become unavailable?

"I reiterate the statement that the principle of civil disobedience is implicitly conceded in the settlement of 5th March 1931, arrived at between the then Viceroy on behalf of the Government of India and myself on behalf of the Congress. I hope you know that the principal Congressmen were discharged before that settlement was even thought of. Certain reparations were made to Congressmen under that settlement. Civil disobedience was discontinued only on the conditions being fulfilled by the Government. That by itself was, in my opinion, an acknowledgement of its legitimacy, of course, under given circumstances. It, therefore, seems somewhat strange to

find you maintain that civil disobedience 'cannot be recognized as being in any circumstances legitimate by your Government'. You ignore the practice of the British Government which has recognized its legitimacy under the name of 'passive resistance'.

"Lastly, you read into my letters a meaning which is wholly inconsistent with my declaration, in one of them, of my adherence to unadulterated non-violence. For, you say in your letter under reply, that 'acceptance of my point of view would be to concede that the authorized Government of the country on which lies the responsibility for maintaining peace and good order, would allow the movements to take place that would admit preparations for violence, interruptions of communications, for attacks on innocent persons, for murders of police officers and others, to proceed unchecked.' I must be a strange friend of yours whom you believe to be capable of asking for recognition of such things as lawful.

"I have not attempted an exhaustive reply to the views and the statements attributed to me. This is neither the place nor the time for such reply. I have only picked out those things which in my opinion demanded an immediate answer. You have left me no loophole for escaping the ordeal I have set before for myself. I begin it on the 9th instant with the clearest possible conscience. Despite your description of it as 'a form of political blackmail', it is on my part meant to be an appeal to the Highest Tribunal for justice which I have failed to secure from you. If I do not survive the ordeal, I shall go to the Judgement Seat with the fullest faith in my innocence. Posterity will judge between you as representative of an all-powerful Government and me as a humble man who had tried to serve his country and humanity through it."

On February 8, Gandhi received the following letter from Sir Richard Tottenham, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department:

"The Government of India would be very reluctant to see you fast, and I am instructed to inform you that they would propose that, should you persist in your intention, you will be set at liberty for the purpose and the duration of your fast as from the time of its commencement. During the period of your fast there will be no objection to your proceeding where you wish, though the Government of India trust that you will be able to arrange for your accommodation away from Aga Khan Palace.

"Should you for any reason find yourself unable to take advantage of the arrangements, a decision which the Government of India would greatly regret, they will of course suitably amend the statement of which a copy is now enclosed before it issues. But they wish to repeat, with all earnestness, their anxiety and their hope that the considerations which have carried so much weight with them will equally carry weight with you, and that you will not pursue your present tentative proposal."

The very same day, Gandhi sent the following rejoinder to Sir Richard Tottenham:

"I have very carefully studied your letter. And I am sorry to say that there is nothing in the correspondence which has taken place between His Excellency and myself or in your letter to warrant a recalling of my intention to fast. I have mentioned in my letters to His Excellency the conditions which can induce the prevention or suspension of the step.

"If the temporary release is offered for my convenience, I do not need it. I should be quite content to take my fast as a detenu or prisoner. If it is for the convenience of the Government I am sorry I am unable to suit them much as I should like to do so. I can say this much that I, as a prisoner, shall avoid, as far as is humanly possible, every cause of inconvenience to the Government, save what is inherent in the fast itself. The impending fast has not been conceived to be taken as a free man. Circumstances may arise, as they have done before now, when I may have to fast as a free man. If, therefore, I am released, there will be no fast in terms of my correspondence above mentioned. I shall have to survey the situation *de novo* and decide what I should do. I have no desire to be released under false pretences. In spite of all that has been said against me, I have not to belie the vow of truth and non-violence which alone makes life livable for me. I say this, if it is only for my own satisfaction. It does me good to reiterate openly my faith, when outer darkness surrounds me, as it does just now.

"I must not hustle the Government into a decision on this letter. I understand that your letter has been dictated through telephone. In order to give the Government enough time, I shall suspend the fast, if necessary, to Wednesday next, 10th instant.

"So far as the statement proposed to be issued by the Government is concerned, and of which you have favoured me with a copy

I can have no opinion. But if I might have, I must say that it does me an injustice. The proper course would be to publish the full correspondence and let the public judge for themselves."

On the eve of the epic fast, the Government of India conveyed the following message to Gandhi on telephone:

"The Government of India note your decision with great regret. Their position remains the same, that is to say, they are ready to set you at liberty for the purpose and the duration of your fast. But, if you are not prepared to take advantage of that fact and if you fast while in detention, you will do so solely on your own responsibility and at your own risk. In that event, you will be at liberty to have your own medical attendants, and also to receive visits from friends with the permission of Government during its period. Suitable drafting alterations will be made in the statement which the Government of India would, in that event, issue to the press."

On February 10 came the official announcement that the fast had already commenced. Simultaneously with this announcement, the Government released to the press the correspondence between the Viceroy and Gandhi. The following was the text of the Government of India communique:

"Mr. Gandhi had informed H. E. the Viceroy that he proposes to undertake a fast of three weeks' duration from the 10th February. It is to be a fast according to capacity, and during it Mr. Gandhi proposes to add juices of citrus fruit to water to make water drinkable, as his wish is not to fast to death, but to survive the ordeal. The Government of India deplore the use of the weapon of fasting to achieve political ends. There can, in their judgement, be no justification for it, and Mr. Gandhi has himself admitted in the past that it contains an element of coercion. The Government of India can only express its regret that Mr. Gandhi should think it necessary to employ such a weapon on this occasion, and should seek a justification for it in anything which the Government may have said or done in connection with the movement initiated by him and his co-workers in the Congress party. The Government of India have no intention on their part of allowing the fast to deflect their policy. Nor will they be responsible for its consequences on Mr. Gandhi's health. They cannot prevent Mr. Gandhi from fasting. It was their wish, however, that if he decided to do so, he should do so as a free man and under his own arrangements, so as to bring out clearly

that the responsibility for any fast and its consequences rested exclusively with him. They accordingly informed Mr. Gandhi that he would be released for the purpose and for the duration of the fast of which he had notified them, and with him any members of the party living with him who may wish to accompany him. In reply Mr. Gandhi has expressed his readiness to abandon his intended fast if released, failing which he will fast in detention. In other words, it is now clear that only his unconditional release would prevent him from fasting. This the Government of India are not prepared to concede. Their position remains the same: that is to say, they are ready to set Mr. Gandhi at liberty for the purpose and duration of his fast. But if Mr. Gandhi is not prepared to take advantage of that fact and if he fasts while in detention, he does so solely on his own responsibility and at his own risk. He would be at liberty in that event to have his own medical attendants, and also to receive visits from friends with the permission of Government during its period.

"The Government of India propose to issue, in due course, a full statement on the origin and development of the movement which was initiated in August last, and measures which they have been compelled to adopt to deal with it. But they think this a suitable occasion for a brief review of the events of the last few months.

"Mr. Gandhi, in his correspondence with the Viceroy, has repudiated all responsibility for the consequences which have flowed from the 'Quit India' demand which Mr. Gandhi and the Congress party have put forward. This contention will not bear examination. Mr. Gandhi's own statement, before the movement was launched, envisaged anarchy as an alternative to the existing order, and referred to the struggle as 'a fight to the finish in the course of which he would not hesitate to run any risk, however great.' As much has been made of his offer to meet the Viceroy, it is necessary to point out that at a press interview on the 14th of July, after the Working Committee resolution was passed, Mr. Gandhi stated that there was no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or for negotiation; there was no question of one more chance; it was an open rebellion which was to be as short and as swift as possible. His last message was 'do or die'. The speeches of those most closely associated with Mr. Gandhi have been even more explicit, and have given a clear indication of what the Congress High Command had in mind in

launching their attack—an attack which would, if realized, have most seriously imperilled the whole cause of the United Nations—against Government by law established, and against the agencies and services by which the life of the country was being conducted in a period, be it noted, of exceptional stress and strain and grave danger to India from Japanese aggression.

"The instructions issued by the various Congress organizations contained in leaflets which were found to be freely circulating in almost every part of India—and which, on the evidence, cannot all be disowned as unauthorized—gave specific directions bringing the administration to a standstill. The circular of the 29th July emanating from the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee is an instance in point. It is noteworthy in this connection that in widely separated areas all over the country identical methods of attacks on the railways and other communications were employed, requiring the use of special implements and highly technical knowledge. The control rooms and block instruments in railway stations came in for special attention and the destruction of telegraph and telephone wires and equipment was carried out in a manner which denoted a careful planning and a close knowledge of their working. If these manifestations of rebellious activities are to be regarded as a result not of Congress teachings but as a manifestation of popular resentment against the arrest of Mr. Gandhi and the Congress leaders, the question may well be asked to which section of the public the tens of thousands of men engaged in these violent subversive activities belonged. If it is claimed that it is not the Congressmen who have been responsible, it would be extraordinary, to say the least, if the blame were to be laid on non-Congress elements. The country is, in effect, asked to believe that those who own allegiance to the Congress have behaved in an exemplary non-violent manner, and that it is persons who are outside the Congress fold who have registered their resentment at the arrest of the leaders of a movement which they did not profess to follow. A more direct answer to the argument is to be had in the fact that known Congressmen have repeatedly been found engaged in incitements to violence, or in prosecuting Congress activities which have led to grave disorders.

"That the political parties and groups outside the Congress party have no delusions on the subject may be judged from the categorical way in which they have dissociated themselves from the

movement and condemned the violence to which it has given rise. In particular the Muslim League has, on more than one occasion, emphasized the character and intentions of the policy pursued by the Congress party. As early as the 20th of August last, the Working Committee of the League expressed the view, reiterated many times since, that by the slogan 'Quit India' what was really meant was supreme control of the government of the country by the Congress, and that the mass civil disobedience movement had resulted in lawlessness and considerable destruction of life and property. Other elements in the political life of the country have expressed themselves in a similar vein, and if the followers of the Congress persist in their contention that the resultant violence was no part of their policy or programme, they are doing so against the weight of the overwhelming evidence.

"Mr. Gandhi in his letter to the Viceroy has sought to fasten responsibility on the Government of India. The Government of India emphatically repudiate the suggestion. It is clearly preposterous to contend that it is they who are responsible for the violence of the last few months, which so gravely disorganized the normal life of the country and, incidentally, aggravated the difficulties of the food situation at a time when the united energies of the vital task of repelling the enemy and of striking a blow for the freedom of India, the commonwealth and the world."

It was a period of deep anxiety throughout the country. A few indeed dared to hope that Gandhi, at the age of seventy-four, would be able to stand the severe strain of a long fast. Dr. Gilder who was detained in the Yeravda Jail was brought to Aga Khan Palace on the second day of the fast. On the third day, Gandhi discontinued his daily morning walk and evening visit to the spot where Mahadev Desai was cremated. The only activity in which Gandhi continued to participate was the prayer at dawn and dusk with his fellow detainees. By the fourth day, nausea began to appear bringing disturbed sleep in its train; the daily communiques were being issued by the Bombay Government. Dr. B. C. Roy arrived in Poona on the 15th and he was allowed to attend on Gandhi throughout the fast. Massage was given to him from the 16th of February onwards. The next day his heart action became feebler. Evidence of uraemia began to appear causing great anxiety. On February 17, Sir H. P. Mody, Mr. N. R. Sarkar and Mr. M. S. Aney resigned from

the Viceroy's Executive Council on "a fundamental issue", namely Gandhi's fast. On February 18, anxiety deepened. Gandhi did not show any inclination to talk since that morning, nor did he show the same interest in his visitors as earlier. In all, thirty visitors were permitted to see him.

Meanwhile, intense country-wide agitation for his release was in full swing. On February 19, a non-party conference attended by the representatives of almost every section of opinion met at Delhi and urged on the Government the desirability in the interest of Indo-British relationships, of Gandhi's immediate release. Jinnah refused to have anything with the conference. Both Lord Linlithgow and Churchill remained adamant. The Government refused even Mr. William Phillips, President Roosevelt's personal envoy in India, permission to see Gandhi at Aga Khan Palace.

The health bulletin, dated February 20, said that Gandhi's condition had changed for the worse. He spent most of his time in bed in silence, listening to the reading of the Gita. The next day, the crisis developed and the doctors said that if the fast was not ended without delay, it might be too late to save his life. He was too weak to be weighed; by February 19 he had already lost fourteen pounds. The doctors now prevailed upon Gandhi to add orange juice to water instead of lemon juice to make water drinkable. The change to orange juice brought the nausea under some control and permitted a larger quantity of water to be taken. Some British press correspondents made a capital out of the addition of orange juice and spread malicious reports.

On February 22, his condition was serious. He was seized with severe nausea and almost fainted, and the pulse became nearly imperceptible. The police and military precautions were complete. It was rumoured that the Government had stocked enough sandal wood for the cremation. *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances,* a Government publication, was issued that day to slander Gandhi and the Congress.

On the 23rd, Gandhi's mind seemed clearer and he recognized without difficulty the visitors whom he had not met for a long time. The doctors who examined him in the morning and in the evening on the 24th came out with a more confident look on their faces. The communique stated: "With the beginning of the third week the prospect of Gandhiji successfully terminating the fast appears to

be brighter, though daily increasing weakness with its corresponding risk can by no means be ignored."

On February 28, with two more days to break his fast, Gandhi looked more cheerful and less apathetic than the day before. Nausea was absent and he was able to take in more water without difficulty. Despite growing exhaustion, he was mentally alert on March 1. The gates of the palace prison were opened to the visitors for the last time on March 2, the final day of the fast.

On March 3, at nine in the morning, the inmates of Aga Khan Palace sang "Vaishnava Jan" and two stanzas from *Gitanjali* and "Lead Kindly Light". Portions from the Gita and the Koran were also recited. Mrs. Naidu recited Tagore's poem, "This my prayer to meet my Lord." At 9.30 a.m., the ceremony over, Kasturbai handed Gandhi a glass containing six ounces of orange juice diluted with water. He took twenty minutes to sip the juice.

Gandhi survived the ordeal. "He was very near death," stated Dr. B. C. Roy. "Mahatmaji fooled us all." Daily medical bulletins were continued for three days after the fast. The iron curtain thereafter fell again on Aga Khan Palace.

Dead End

1943

THE FAST over, there was an intense agitation in India and abroad for dissolution of the deadlock. *New York Times* commenting on the termination of Gandhi's fast observed that "moral victory" had been gained by both the sides and the episode had ended. "The question now arises whether the time has now come to make a fresh start in India." *Manchester Guardian* wrote: "It is fortunate for the hope of ultimate friendship between us and India that Gandhi has not died. But it is untrue that the political situation in India remains the same." Bernard Shaw said: "The imprisonment of Gandhi is the stupidest blunder the Government has let itself be landed in by its right wing of incurable diehards. The King should release him unconditionally as an act of grace unconcerned with policy, and apologize to him for the mental defectiveness of his cabinet." The Chinese journals asked for the release of the Congress prisoners and happy termination of the impasse.

The non-Congress leaders, who met in Bombay in March 1943, issued a statement: "We are of opinion that the deplorable events of the last few months require a reconsideration of their policy, both by the Government and the Congress. The recent talks which some of us have had with Gandhiji lead us to believe that a move for reconciliation at the present juncture will bear fruit. It is our conviction that, if Gandhiji is set at liberty, he will do his best to give guidance and assistance in the solution of internal deadlock and that there need be no fear that there would be any danger to the successful prosecution of war. The Viceroy may be approached on our behalf to permit a few representatives to meet Gandhiji to authoritatively ascertain his reaction to the recent events and to explore with him avenues for reconciliation."

The statement was signed by thirty-six leaders, including Sapru, Jayakar, Rajagopalachari, Bhulabhai Desai, Sir Ardeshir Dalal, Sir

Homi Modi and others. Savarkar was not present, but he signified his assent to the general demand.

When approached for a deputation, the Viceroy precluded personal discussions on points which the deputationists wished to raise. Thereupon the deputationists contented themselves with merely forwarding the memorandum and getting it published simultaneously with the Viceroy's reply in the press.

The leaders' deputation, in their memorandum to the Viceroy, observed:

"We are convinced that Gandhiji's assistance is essential for the restoration of goodwill and for a solution of the problem even for the interim period, including an adjustment of the Hindu-Muslim claims. On the other hand, unpleasant as it is, we cannot help feeling, that refusing to permit us to have any contact with Gandhiji now would be equivalent to a determination on the part of Britain that there should be no attempt at a settlement of the problem and no reconciliation between the nationalist India and Britain. Whatever may be the immediate administrative convenience thereof, we hope that His Excellency will not take up this attitude. We feel that though there is no present danger of the Axis aggression in India, the strained relation between the Government and the people is fraught with grave evil and all that is possible should be done to replace it by a better feeling. The situation is growing more and more serious everyday and we feel that a government commanding the loyal and the affectionate co-operation of all the people can be constituted for the period of war, only if we are permitted to talk with Gandhiji, consult him and obtain his support."

The Viceroy, in a curt reply, turned down the leaders' request: "The matter can be considered further, only if certain assurances and guarantees are previously obtained from the Congress leaders in detention." In refusing to give facilities for contact with Gandhi, Lord Linlithgow stated:

"So long as the Congress policy remains what it is, there can be no question of any alteration in our attitude towards the Congress. I have already pointed out that neither from Mr. Gandhi nor from the Congress is there, or has there been, any suggestion of a change of mind or heart. They had the opportunity and have the opportunity still to abandon that policy. With every respect for your good intentions and your anxiety to see a happy solution, I

cannot agree to give special facilities such as you ask for contact with Mr. Gandhi and the Congress leaders while conditions remain as I have described them."

The non-party leaders headed by Sapru returned to the charge again in May. They made a statement urging the appointment of an impartial tribunal to investigate the charges made against the Congress leaders in detention or, in the alternative, release of those leaders, so as to enable them to review the situation and attempt a solution of the deadlock. To the objection that the setting of a tribunal would lead to a public excitement, they replied:

"The continued detention of these leaders has already caused and is causing grave dissatisfaction and a keen sense of injustice in public mind. If Mahatma Gandhi and his colleagues are not allowed to meet the charges against them until after the war and are to be kept in prison till then, the plain implication of this is that some of the most prominent Indian leaders will be kept in prison without trial for maybe five years and some of them may even die during this long interval. Mr. Amery's tauntingly provocative description of such detention as 'innocuous isolation' has only increased public resentment. Government may think that they are the sole judges as to when and whom to arrest and detain without trial for an unlimited period. Whatever may be said of such action on the part of a government of the people, it cannot apply to a government carried on by an irremovable executive irresponsible to the people of this country or to its legislature and in which the key positions are still in British hands. Whatever the legal position, the Government of India must in the circumstances seek a moral basis for its actions and it is with that object in view that we suggest an investigation by an impartial tribunal."

In this connection, they drew pointed attention to the Federal Court's decision which invalidated arrest under the Defence Rules. "Instead of availing themselves of the opportunity to restore those men to freedom under the sanction of a decision by the highest judicial authority in India, we regret that the Government of India have tried to legalize their action by a validating ordinance."

The Government remained adamant. Mr. Amery informed the House of Commons that the Government of India had no intention of staging a trial of Gandhi and other detained Congress leaders. The debate that followed in the House of Lords revealed ignorance

of the situation in India on part of the members. Lord Samuel's speech contained a number of grossly unjust strictures against the Congress and Gandhi.

On May 15, Gandhi wrote a letter to Lord Samuel pointing out the misrepresentation in his speech:

"I enclose herewith a cutting from the *Hindu* dated the 8th April last containing Reuter's summary of your speech in the House of Lords, during the recent debate. Assuming the correctness of the summary, I feel impelled to write this letter.

"The report distressed me. I was wholly unprepared for your unqualified association with the one-sided and unjustified statement of the Government of India against the Congress and me.

"You are a philosopher and a liberal. A philosophic mind has always meant for me a detached mind, and liberalism a sympathetic understanding of men and things.

"As it seems to me, there is nothing in what the Government has said to warrant the conclusions to which you are reported to have come.

"From the summary I select a few items which, in my opinion, are inconsistent with facts.

"1. 'The Congress party has to a great extent thrown over democratic philosophy.'

"The Congress has never 'thrown over democratic philosophy.' Its career has been one progressive march towards democracy. Every one who subscribes to the attainment of the goal of independence through peaceful and legitimate means and pays four annas per year can become its member.

"2. 'It shows signs of turning towards totalitarianism.'

"You have based your charge on the fact that the Working Committee of the Congress had control over the late Congress ministries. Does not the successful party in the House of Commons do likewise? I am afraid even when democracy has come to full maturity, the parties will be running the elections and their managing committees will be controlling the actions and the policies of their members. Individual Congressmen did not run elections independently of the party machinery. Candidates were officially chosen and they were helped by all-India leaders. 'Totalitarian' according to the *Pocket Oxford Dictionary* means 'designating a party that permits no rival loyalties or parties'. 'Totalitarian state' means 'with only

one governing party'. It must have violence for its sanction for keeping control. Every Congress member, on the contrary, enjoys the same freedom as the Congress President, or any member of the Working Committee. There are parties within the Congress itself. Above all, the Congress eschews violence. Members render voluntary obedience. The A.-I.C.C. can at any moment unseat the members of the Working Committee and elect others.

"3. 'They (Congress ministers) resigned (not?) because they had not the support of their assemblies. They resigned because *de jure* they were responsible to their electorates, *de facto* they were responsible to the Working Committee of the Congress and to the High Command. That is not democracy. That is totalitarianism.'

"You would not have said this, if you had known the full facts. The *de jure* responsibility of the ministers to the electorate was not diminished in any way by their *de facto* responsibility to the Congress Working Committee, for the very simple and valid reason that the Working Committee derives its power and its prestige from the very electorate to whom the ministers were responsible. The prestige that the Congress enjoys is due solely to its service of the people. As a matter of fact, the ministers conferred with the members of their parties in their respective assemblies and they tendered their resignations with their approval. But totalitarianism is fully represented by the Government of India which is responsible to no one in India. It is a tragic irony that a Government which is steeped in totalitarianism brings that very charge against the most democratic body in India.

"4. 'India is unhappy in that the line of the party division is the worst any country can have . . . it is division according to the religious communities.'

"Political parties in India are not divided according to religious communities. From its very commencement, the Congress has deliberately remained a purely political organization. It has had the Britishers and the Indians, including Christians, Parsis, Musalmans and Hindus as presidents. The Liberal Party of India is another political organization, not to mention others that are wholly nonsectarian. That there are also communal organizations based on religion and they take part in politics, is undoubtedly true. But that fact cannot sustain the categorical statement by you. I do not wish in any way to minimize the importance of these organizations or

the considerable part they play in the politics of the country. But I do assert that they do not represent the political mind of India. It can be shown that historically politico-religious organizations are the result of the deliberate application by the Government of the 'divide and rule' policy. When the British imperial influence is totally withdrawn, India will probably be represented solely by political parties drawn from all classes and creeds.

"5. 'The Congress can claim at best barely more than half the population of India. Yet, in their totalitarian spirit, they claim to speak for the whole.'

"If you measure the representative character of the Congress by the number of members on the official roll, then it does not represent even half the population. The official membership is infinitesimal compared to India's vast population of nearly four hundred millions. The enrolled membership began only in 1920. Before that the Congress was represented by its All-India Congress Committee whose members were mainly elected by various political associations. Nevertheless, Congress has, so far as I know, always claimed to speak the mind of India, not excluding the princes. A country under alien subjection can only have one political goal, namely, its freedom from that subjection. And considering that the Congress has always and predominantly exhibited that spirit of freedom, its claim to represent the whole of India can hardly be denied. That some parties repudiate the Congress does not derogate from the claim in the sense in which it has been advanced.

"6. 'When Mr. Gandhi called upon the British Government to quit India, he said it would be for the Congress to take delivery.'

"I never said that when the British quitted India, 'the Congress would take delivery.' This is what I said in my letter to H. E. the Viceroy dated 29 February last: 'The Government have evidently ignored or overlooked the very material fact that the Congress, by its August resolution, asked nothing for itself. All its demands were for the whole people. As you should be aware, the Congress was willing and prepared for the Government inviting Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah to form a national government subject to such agreed adjustments as may be necessary for the duration of the war, such Government being responsible to a duly elected assembly . . .'

"7. 'If this country or Canada, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa or the United States of America had abstained from action

as the Congress in India abstained . . . then perhaps the cause of freedom everywhere would have gone under . . . It is a pity that the leaders of the Congress do not realize that glory is not to be won in India by abandoning the cause of mankind.'

"How can you compare India with Canada and other dominions which are virtually independent entities, let alone Britain or the United States wholly independent countries? Has India a spark of the freedom of the type enjoyed by the countries named by you? India has yet to attain her freedom. Supposing the allied powers were to lose, and supposing further that the allied forces were to withdraw from India under military necessity, which I do not expect, the countries you name may lose their independence. But unhappy India will be obliged to change masters, if she is then in her defenceless state. The Congress does not abstain out of cussedness. Neither the Congress, nor any other organization can possibly kindle mass enthusiasm for the allied cause without the present possession of independence, to use your own expression either *de jure* or *de facto*. Mere promise of future independence cannot work that miracle. The cry of 'Quit India' has arisen from a realization of the fact that if India is to shoulder the burden of representing, or fighting for the cause of mankind, she must have the glow of freedom now. Has a freezing man ever been warmed by the promise of the warmth of sunshine coming at some future date?

"The great pity is that ruling power distrusts every thing that the Congress does or says under my influence which it has suddenly discovered is wholly evil. It was in 1935 that I was successful in my attempt to sever all formal connection with the Congress. There was no coolness between the Congress Working Committee members and myself. But I realized that I was cramped and so were the members, whilst I was officially connected with the Congress. The growing restraints which my conception of non-violence required from time to time were proving too hard to bear. I felt, therefore, that my influence should be strictly moral. I had no political ambition. My politics were subservient to the demands of truth and non-violence, as I had defined and had practised for practically the whole of my life. And so I was permitted by the fellow members to sever the official connection even to the extent of giving up the four-anna membership. It was understood between us that I should attend the meetings of the Congress Working Committee only when

the members required my presence for consultation in matters involving the application of non-violence or affecting the communal unity. Since that time, I have been wholly unconnected with the routine work of the Congress. Many meetings of the Working Committee have, therefore, taken place without me. Their proceedings I have seen only when they have been published in newspapers. Members of the Working Committee are independent-minded men. They engage me often in prolonged discussions before they accept my advice on the interpretation of non-violence as applied to the problems arising from new situations. It will be, therefore, unjust to them and to me to say that I exercise any influence over them beyond what reason commands. The public know how even until quite recently the majority of the members of the Working Committee have on several occasions rejected my advice.

"8. 'They have not merely abstained from action, but the Congress has deliberately proclaimed the formula that it is wrong to help the British war effort by men or money and the only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance. In the name of non-violence, they have led a movement which was characterized in many places by the utmost violence and the white paper gives a clear proof of the complicity of the Indian Congress leaders in the disorders.'

"This charge shows to what extent the British public has been misled by imaginary stories, as in the Government of India publication statements have been torn from their context and put together as if they were made at one time or in the same context. The Congress is committed to non-violence, so far as the attainment of freedom is concerned. And to that end, the Congress has been struggling all these twenty years, however imperfectly it may be, to express non-violence in action, and I think it has succeeded to a great extent. But it has never made any pretence of war resistance through non-violence. Could it have made that claim and lived up to it, the face of India would have been changed and the world would have witnessed the miracle of organized violence being successfully met by organized non-violence. But human nature has nowhere risen to the full height which full non-violence demands. The disturbances that took place after the 8th of August were not due to any action on the part of the Congress. They were due entirely to the inflammatory action of the Government in arresting

Congress leaders throughout India and that at a time which was psychologically wholly wrong. The utmost that can be said is that Congressmen or others had not risen high enough in non-violence to be proof against all provocation.

"It surprises me that although you have admitted 'this white paper may be good journalism but it is not so good as a state document,' you have based your sweeping judgement on the strength of that paper. If you would read the very speeches to which the paper makes reference, you will find there ample material to show that the Government of India had not the slightest justification in making those unfortunate arrests on August 9 and after, or in making the charges they have brought against the arrested leaders after their incarceration—charges which have never been sifted in any court of law.

"9. 'Mr. Gandhi faced us with an utterly illegitimate method of political controversy, levying blackmail on the best of human emotions, pity and sympathy, by his fast. The only creditable thing to Mr. Gandhi about the fast was his ending it.'

"You have used a strong word to characterize my fast. H. E. the Viceroy has also allowed himself to use the same word. You have perhaps the excuse of ignorance. He had no such excuse for he had my letters before him. All I can tell you is that fasting is an integral part of satyagraha. It is a satyagrahi's ultimate weapon. Why should it be blackmail when a man under a sense of wrong crucifies his flesh? You may not know that satyagrahi prisoners fasted in South Africa for the removal of their wrongs; so they have done in India. One fast of mine you know, as I think you were then a cabinet minister. I refer to the fast which resulted in the alteration of the decision of His Majesty's Government. If the decision had stood, it would have perpetuated the curse of untouchability. The alteration prevented the disaster.

"The Government of India communique announcing my recent fast, issued after it had commenced, accused me of having undertaken the fast to secure my release. It was a wholly false accusation. It was based on a distortion of the letter I had written in answer to that of the Government. That letter dated the 8th February was suppressed at the time when the communique was issued . . .

"And I do not know from where you got the impression that I ended the fast, for which supposed act you give me the credit. If

you mean by it that I ended the fast before its time, I would call such an ending a discredit to me. As it was, the fast ended on its due date for which I can claim no credit.

"10. 'He (Lord Samuel) considered that the negotiations broke down on points on which they would not have broken down, had there been any real desire on the part of the Congress to come to a settlement.'

"The statement made by the President of the Congress, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and Pandit Nehru, who carried on the prolonged negotiations, I venture to think, make it quite clear that no true man could have shown more real or greater desire for a settlement. In this connection it is well to remember that Pandit Nehru was, and I have no doubt still remains, an intimate friend of Sir Stafford Cripps at whose invitation he had come from Allahabad. He could, therefore, leave no stone unturned to bring the negotiations to a successful issue. The history of the failure has yet to be written; when it is, it will be found that the cause lay elsewhere than with the Congress.

"I hope my letter has not wearied you. Truth has been overlaid with much untruth. If not justice to a great organization, the cause of truth, which is humanity, demands an impartial investigation of the present distemper."

The Government of India refused to forward Gandhi's letter to Lord Samuel. "The Government's decision," complained Gandhi, "amounts to a ban on the ordinary right belonging to a convict of correcting damaging misrepresentations made about him."

A similar attitude was taken by the Government in suppressing Gandhi's letter to Jinnah written a week earlier. It read thus:

"When, some time after my incarceration, Government asked me for a list of newspapers I would like to have, I included the *Dawn* in my list. I have been receiving it with more or less regularity. Whenever it comes to me, I read it carefully. I have followed the proceedings of the League as reported in the *Dawn* columns. I noted your invitation to me to write to you. Hence this letter.

"I welcome your invitation. I suggest our meeting face to face rather than our talking through correspondence. But I am in your hands.

"I hope that this letter will be sent to you and if you agree to my proposal, that the Government will let you visit me.

"One thing I had better mention. There seems to be an 'if' about your invitation. Do you say I should write only if I have changed my heart? God alone knows men's hearts. I would like you to take me as I am.

"Why should not you and I approach the great question of communal unity as men determined on finding a common solution and work together to make our solution acceptable to all who are concerned with it or are interested in it?"

The letter was not delivered. The official communique said:

"The Government have received a request from Mr. Gandhi to forward a short letter from himself to Mr. Jinnah expressing a wish to meet him.

"In accordance with their known policy in regard to the correspondence or interviews with Mr. Gandhi the Government of India have decided that this letter cannot be forwarded and have so informed Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah. They are not prepared to give facilities for political correspondence or contact to a person detained for promoting an illegal mass movement which he had not disavowed and thus gravely embarrassing India's war effort at a critical time. It rests with Mr. Gandhi to satisfy the Government that he can safely be allowed once more to participate in public affairs of the country, and until he does so the disabilities from which he suffers are of his own choice."

On May 27, Gandhi wrote the following letter to Sir Richard Tottenham:

"I received last evening your letter refusing my request to forward my letter addressed to Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah. I wrote only yesterday to the superintendent of this camp asking him kindly to inquire whether my letter to Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah, and later, the one dated the 15th instant, to Rt. Hon. Lord Samuel had been forwarded to the respective addressees.

"I am sorry for the Government's decision. For my letter to the Qaid-e-Azam was sent in reply to his public invitation to me to write to him, and I was especially encouraged to do so because his language had led me to think that if I wrote to him, my letter would be forwarded to him. The public too are anxious that the Qaid-e-Azam and I should meet or at least establish contact. I have always been anxious to meet the Qaid-e-Azam if perchance we could devise some solution of the communal tangle which might

be generally acceptable. Therefore, the disability in the present instance is much more that of the public than mine. As a satyagrahi I may not regard as disabilities the restrictions which the Government have imposed upon me. As the Government are aware, I have denied myself the pleasure of writing to my relatives as I am not allowed to perform the service of writing to my co-workers who are in a sense more to me than my relatives.

"The advance copy of the contemplated communique with which you have considerately favoured me requires amendation in more places than one. For, as it stands, it does not square with facts.

"As to the disavowal referred to in the proposed communique, the Government of India are aware that I regard the non-violent mass movement, for the launching of which the Congress gave me authority on the 8th August last, as perfectly legitimate and in the interest of the Government and the public. As it is, the Government left me no time to start the movement. Therefore, how a movement, which was never started, could embarrass 'India's' war effort? If then, there was any embarrassment by reason of the popular resentment of the Government's action in resorting to the wholesale arrests of principal Congressmen, the responsibility was solely that of the Government. The mass movement, as the resolution sanctioning it said in so many words, was sanctioned in order to promote India-wide effort on behalf of the allied cause, including the cause of Russia and China, whose danger was very great in August last and from which, in my opinion, they are by no means free even now. I hope the Government will not feel offended, when I say that all the war effort that is being put forth in India is not India's but the alien Government's. I submit that if the Government had complied with the request of the Congress as embodied in its August resolution, there would have been a mass effort without parallel for winning the battle of human freedom and ridding the world of the menace that fascism, Nazism, Japanism and imperialism are. I may be wholly wrong; any way this is my deliberate and honest opinion.

"In order to make the communique accord with facts, I suggest the following alteration in the first paragraph: After Mr. Jinnah add 'in response to his public invitation to Mr. Gandhi to write to him stating that he (Mr. Gandhi) would be willing to correspond with or meet him according as he wished.'"

"'I hope that the remaining portion of the communique too will be suitably amended in the light of my submission.'

The Government refused to modify their communique. In the press statement Jinnah said: "This letter of Mr. Gandhi can only be construed as a move on his part to embroil the Muslim League to come into clash with the British Government solely for the purpose of helping his release." A few weeks earlier, Jinnah had said: "He is writing letters to the Viceroy. Why does he not write to me direct? Who is there that can prevent him from doing so? I cannot believe that the Government will have the daring to stop such a letter, if it is sent to me. It will be a very serious thing, indeed, if such a thing is done by the Government. But I do not see evidence of any kind of change on the part of Mr. Gandhi or the Congress or the Hindu leadership."

The Government brought every obstacle in the way of Gandhi's endeavour to dissolve the deadlock and they tried their utmost to misrepresent the Congress. On May 21, Gandhi addressed the following letter to Sir Reginald Maxwell, Home Member, Government of India:

"It was only on the 10th instant, that I read your speech delivered in the Legislative Assembly on the 15th February last on the adjournment motion about my fast. I saw at once that it demanded a reply. I wish I had read it earlier.

"I observe that you are angry, or at least were at the time you delivered your speech. I cannot in any other way account for your palpable inaccuracies. This letter is an endeavour to show them. It is written to you, not as an official, but as man to man. The first thought that came to me was that your speech was a deliberate distortion of facts. But I quickly revised it. So long as there was a favourable construction possible to put upon your language, the unfavourable had to be rejected. I must assume, therefore, that what appeared to me to be distortions were not deliberate.

"You have said that 'the correspondence that led to the fast is there for anyone to interpret as he chooses'; yet you have straightway told your audience that 'it can perhaps be read in the light of the following facts.' Did you leave them the choice?

"I now take your 'facts' *seriatim*:

"1. 'When the Congress passed their resolution of August 8th, a Japanese attack on this country was thought to be likely.'

"You seem to have conveyed the meaning that the thought was that of the Congress and that it was gratuitous. The fact is that the Government gave currency to the thought and emphasized it by action which even seemed ludicrous.

"2. 'By demanding the withdrawal of British power from India and by placing the Congress in open opposition to it, the Congress party might be thought to have hoped for some advantage to themselves if the Japanese attack succeeded.'

"Now this is not a fact but your opinion wholly contrary to facts. Congressmen never hoped for, nor desired, any advantage from the Japanese success: on the contrary, they dreaded it and that dread inspired the desire for the immediate end of British rule. All this is crystal clear from the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee (8th August 1942) and my writings.

"3. 'Today, six months after, the Japanese danger has, at any rate, for the time being, receded and there is little immediate hope from that quarter.'

"This again is your opinion, mine is that the Japanese danger has not receded. It still stares India in the face. Your fling that 'there is little immediate hope from that quarter,' should be withdrawn, unless you think and prove that the resolution and my writings adverted to in the previous paragraph did not mean what they said.

"4. 'The movement initiated by the Congress has been decisively defeated.'

"I must combat this statement. Satyagraha knows no defeat. It flourishes on blows the hardest imaginable. But I need not go to that bower for comfort. I learnt in the schools established by the British Government in India that 'Freedom's battle once begun is bequeathed from bleeding sire to son.' It is of little moment when the goal is reached, so long as effort is not relaxed. The dawn came with the establishment of the Congress sixty years ago. The 6th of April, 1919, on which all-India satyagraha began, saw a spontaneous awakening from one end of India to the other. You can certainly derive comfort, if you like, from the fact that immediate objective of the movement was not gained as some Congressmen had expected. But that is no criterion of 'decisive' or any 'defeat'. It ill becomes one belonging to a race which owns no defeat to deduce defeat of a popular movement from the suppression of the

popular exuberance, may be not always wise, by a frightful exhibition of power.

"5. 'Now, it is the object of the Congress party to rehabilitate themselves and regain if they can the credit they have lost.'

"Surely, your own experience should correct this opinion. You know, as well as I do, that every attempt at suppression of the Congress has given it greater prestige and popularity. This the latest attempt at suppression is not likely to lead to a contrary result. Hence the questions of 'lost credit' and 'rehabilitation' simply do not arise.

"6. 'Thus they are now concerned to disclaim responsibility for the consequences that followed their decision. The point is taken up by Mr. Gandhi in his correspondence with the Viceroy. The awkward facts are now disowned as unproved.'

" 'They' here can only mean 'me'. For throughout your speech I was the target. 'Now' means at the time of my fast. I remind you that I disclaimed responsibility on 14th August last when I wrote to the Viceroy. In that same letter I laid it on the Government who by their wholesale arrests of 9th August provoked the people to the point of madness. 'The awkward facts' are not awkward for me when the responsibility rests on the Government and what you put forward as 'facts' are only one-sided allegations awaiting proof.

"7. 'Mr. Gandhi takes up his stand: I can say with safety that it is for the Government to justify their action by solid evidence.

" 'To whom are they to justify themselves?'

"Sardar Sant Singh: 'Before an impartial inquiry committee.'

"Was not Sardar Sant Singh's answer a proper one? How nice it would have been if you had not put in the interjection. For, have not the Government of India been obliged before now to justify their acts by appointing inquiry committees, as for instance, after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre?

"But you proceed:

"8. 'Elsewhere in his letters Mr. Gandhi makes this quite clear. He says, "Convince me that I was wrong and I will make ample amends." In the alternative he asks, "If you want me to make any proposal on behalf of the Congress, you should put me among the Working Committee members." So far as can be seen, these were the demands, when he conceived his fast. There is no other solid demand made.'

"Here there is a double wrong done to me. You have ignored the fact that my letters were written to one whom I considered to be a friend. You have further ignored the fact that the Viceroy in his letter had asked me to make clear proposals. If you had borne these two facts in mind, you would not have wronged me as you have done. But let me come to the ninth count of your indictment and it will be clear to you what I mean.

"9. 'But now, fresh light emerges. Government without granting any of his demands informed Mr. Gandhi that they would release him for the purpose and for the duration of the fast in order to make it clear they disclaimed responsibility for the consequences. On that Mr. Gandhi replied that if he was released, he would at once abandon the fast and that he had conceived the fast only as a prisoner. Thus, if he were released, the objects for which he declared his fast, although still unfulfilled, would recede into the background. As a free man, he would neither demand these objects nor fast. Interpreted in this way, his fast would seem to amount to little more than a demand for release.'

"Together with the letter containing the offer of release, a copy of the draft communique that was to be issued by the Government was delivered to me. It did not say that the offer was made in order 'to make it clear that the Government disclaimed responsibility for the consequences'. If I had seen that offending sentence, I would have sent a simple refusal. In my innocence, I put a fair meaning on the offer and in my reply I argued why I could not accept it. And, according to my wont, in order that the Government may not be misled in any shape or form, I told them how the fast was conceived and why it could not be taken by me as a free man. I went out of my way even to postpone, for the convenience of the Government, the commencement of the fast by a day. Mr. Irwin who had brought the offer and the draft communique appreciated the courtesy. Why was this reply of mine withheld from the public at the time the revised communique was issued, and why was an unwarranted interpretation given instead? Was not my letter a material document?

"Now for the second wrong. You say that if I were released then my objects for which I had declared the fast would recede into the background, and even gratuitously suggest that as a free man I would neither demand these objects nor fast. As a free man, I

could and would have carried on an agitation for an impartial public inquiry into the charges brought against Congressmen and me, I would also have asked for permission to see the imprisoned Congressmen. Assume that my agitation had failed to make any impression on the Government. I might then have fasted. All this, if you were not labouring under intense irritation, you could have plainly seen from my letter, supported, as you would have been, by my past record. Instead, you have deduced a meaning which, according to the simple rules of construction, you had no right to deduce. Again, as a free man I would have had the opportunity of examining the tales of destruction said to have been wrought by Congressmen and even by non-Congressmen. And if I had found that they had committed wanton acts of murder, then also I might have fasted as I have done before now. You should thus see that the demands made in my letter to His Excellency the Viceroy would not have receded into the background if I had been released, for they could have been pressed otherwise than by the fast, and that the fast had not the remotest connection with and desire for release. Moreover, imprisonment is never irksome to a satyagrahi. For him a prison is a gateway of liberty.

"10. 'I could quote several resolutions of the Congress Working Committee against him . . . Mr. Gandhi himself took up the subject in the *Harijan* dated 19 August 1939. There he says, "Hunger-strike has positively become a plague." '

"My views quoted by you have not undergone the slightest change. If you had read the quotations without passion, it would have prevented you from putting upon my letter the construction you have.

"11. 'On the ethics of hunger-striking, Mr. Gandhi had something to say in the *Harijan* of 20th May, 1939, after his Rajkot fast: "I now see that it was tainted by *himsa*!" Further on he remarks, "this was not the way of ahimsa or conversion." '

"I am sorry to have to say that you have wholly misread my article . . . I described my fast as 'tainted' not because it was bad *ab initio*, but because I sought the intervention of the paramount power. I have given you the credit of being unaware of the article. I wish you could read it. In any case, may I expect you to correct the error? For me, the Rajkot episode is one of the happiest chapters of my life, in that God gave me the courage to own my

mistake and purge it by renouncing the fruits of the award. I became stronger for the purging.

"12. 'I must confess that speaking for myself it is certainly repugnant to western ideas of decency to exploit against an opponent his feelings of humanity, chivalry or mercy or to trifle with such a sacred trust as one's own life in order to play on the feelings of the public for the sake of some purely mundane object.'

"I must tread with extreme caution upon the ground with which you are infinitely more familiar than I can be. Let me, however, remind you of the historic fast of the late MacSwiney. I know that the British Government let him die in imprisonment. But he has been acclaimed by the Irish people as a hero and a martyr. Edward Thompson in his 'You have lived through all this' says that the late Mr. Asquith called the British Government's action a 'political blunder of the first magnitude'. The author adds: 'He was allowed to die by inches, while the world watched with a passion of admiration and sympathy and innumerable British men and women begged their Government not to be such a damned fool.' And is it repugnant to western ideas of decency to exploit—if that expression must be retained—against the opponent his feelings of humanity, chivalry or mercy? Which is better, to take the opponent's life secretly or openly, or to credit him with finer feelings and evoke them by fasting and the like? Again, which is better, to trifle with one's own life by fasting or some other way of self-immolation, or to trifle with it by engaging in an attempt to compass the destruction of the opponent and his dependants?

"13. 'What he says in effect is this: "You say, the Government is right and the Congress is wrong. I say the Congress is right and the Government is wrong. I chose to put the burden of proof on you. I am the only person to be convinced. You must either admit you are wrong or submit your reasons to me and make me the sole arbiter in the matter." It seems to me that Mr. Gandhi's demand is rather like asking the United Nations to appoint Hitler to adjudge the responsibility for the war. It is not usual in this country to put the accused person on the bench to judge his own case.'

"This is an unbecoming caricature of my letters to the Viceroy. What I said in effect was this: 'You have allowed me to consider myself as your friend. I do not want to stand on my rights and demand a trial. You accuse me of being in the wrong. I contend

that your Government is in the wrong. Since you would not admit your Government's error you owe it to me to let me know wherein I have erred. For, I am in the dark as to how I have erred. If you convince me of my guilt, I will make ample amends.' My simple request you have turned against me and compared me to an imaginary Hitler appointed to adjudge his own case. If you do not accept my interpretation of my own letters, can I not say, let an impartial judge examine the rival interpretations? Will it be an offensive comparison if I recall the fable of the wolf who was always in the right and the lamb who was always in the wrong?

"14. 'Mr. Gandhi is the leader of an open rebellion . . . He forfeits that right—the right of being heard—so long as he remains an open rebel. He cannot claim to function except through the success of his own method. He cannot take part in public life under the protection of the law that he denies. He cannot be a citizen and yet not a subject.'

"You are right in describing me as the leader of an open rebellion except for a fundamental omission, namely, strictly non-violent. This omission is on a par with the omission of 'nots' from the Commandments and quoting them in support of killing, stealing, etc. You may dismiss the phrase or explain it away in any manner you like. But when you quote a person, you may not omit anything from his language, especially an omission which changes the whole aspect of things. I have declared myself an open rebel on many occasions, even during my visit to London on the occasion of the second Round Table Conference. But the anathema that you have pronounced against me has not been pronounced before. You will perhaps recall the time when Lord Reading was willing to hold a round table conference in which I was to be present, although I was leading a mass civil disobedience movement. It was not called because I had insisted that the Ali brothers, who were then in prison, should be released. The British history which I was taught as a lad had it that Wat Tyler and John Hampden who had rebelled were heroes. In very recent times, the British Government treated with the Irish rebels whilst their hands were still red with blood. Why should I become an outcast, although my rebellion is innocent and I have had nothing to do with violence?

"In spite of the validity of my claim that you have enunciated a novel doctrine, I admit that you made a perfect statement when

you said, 'He cannot claim to function except through the success of his own method.' My method, being based on truth and non-violence, ever succeeds to the extent it is applied. Therefore, I function always and only through the success of my own method and to the extent that I correctly represent, in my own person, its fundamentals.

"The moment I became a satyagrahi from that moment I ceased to be a subject, but never ceased to be a citizen. A citizen obeys laws voluntarily and never under compulsion or for fear of the punishment prescribed for their breach. He breaks them when he considers it necessary and welcomes the punishment. That robs it of its edge or of the disgrace which it is supposed to imply.

"15. 'In some of the published correspondence, Mr. Gandhi has made much of his intention to seek an interview with the Viceroy. But the Congress resolution still stood, together with Mr. Gandhi's own words "Do or Die". The Government communique, on the subject of his fast, has already reminded the public of Mr. Gandhi's statement made on the 14th of July that there was no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation . . . I may again quote Mr. Gandhi's own words . . . "Every one of you should, from this moment onwards, consider yourself a free man or woman and act as if you are free and are no longer under the heel of this imperialism." Now listen to this: "You may take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for ministries or the like. I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom." "We shall do or die. We shall either free India or die in the attempt." "This is open rebellion." '

"Let me first of all make a vital correction of the quotation you have taken from my press statement made on the 14th July and reported in the *Harijan* of 19th July. You have quoted me as saying that 'there was no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation.' The real quotation is, 'there is no room left for negotiations in the proposal for withdrawal.' You will admit that the difference is material. Faulty quotation apart, you have omitted from my statement, which occupies nearly three columns of *Harijan*, all the things which amplify my meaning and show the caution with which I was working. I take a few sentences from that statement. 'It is possible that the British may negotiate a withdrawal. If they do it, it will be a feather in their cap. Then it will cease to be

a case for withdrawal. If the British see, however late, the wisdom of recognizing the freedom of India without reference to various parties, all things are possible. But the point I want to stress is this.' Here follows the sentence misquoted by you. The paragraph then proceeds: 'Either they recognize independence or they do not. After recognition, many things can follow, for, by that single act, British representatives will have altered the face of the whole landscape and revived the hope of the people which has been frustrated times without number. Therefore, whenever that great act is performed on behalf of the British people, it will be a red-letter day in the history of India and the world. And, as I have said, it can materially affect the fortunes of war.' From this fuller quotation, you will see how everything that was being done was done in order to ensure victory and ward off Japanese aggression. You may not appreciate my wisdom, but you may not impugn my good faith.

"Though I have no verbatim report of my speeches before the All-India Congress Committee, I have fairly full notes. I accept the correctness of your quotations. If you bear in mind that all things were said with non-violence always as the background, the statements become free from any objection. 'Do or Die' clearly means do your duty by carrying out instructions and die in the attempt, if necessary.

"And as to my exhortation to the people to consider themselves free, I take the following from my notes. 'The actual struggle does not commence this very moment. You have merely placed certain powers in my hands. My first act will be to wait upon His Excellency the Viceroy and plead with him for acceptance of the Congress demand. This may take two or three weeks. What are you to do in the meanwhile? I will tell you. There is the spinning wheel. I had to struggle with the Maulana Saheb before it dawned upon him that in a non-violent struggle it had an abiding place. The fourteenfold constructive programme is all there for you to carry out. But there is something more you have to do and it will give life to that programme. Every one of you should, from this very moment, consider yourself a free man or woman and even act, as if you are free and no longer under the heel of this imperialism. This is no make-believe. You have to cultivate the spirit of freedom before it comes physically. The chains of a slave are broken the moment he considers himself a free man. He will then tell his

master: ' "I have been your slave all these days but I am no longer that now. You may kill me, but if you do not and if you release me from the bondage, I will ask for nothing more from you. For henceforth, instead of depending upon you, I shall depend upon God for food and clothing. God has given me the urge for freedom and, therefore, I deem myself to be a free man." ' Apart from your resentment of 'Quit India' cry, ask yourself whether the quotation as found in its own setting is in any way offensive. Should not a man, longing to be free, first of all cultivate the spirit of freedom and act accordingly irrespective of consequences?

"16. 'It is not the method of peaceful persuasion to go to the person whom you wish to convince armed with a resolution declaring mass rebellion. The essence of negotiation is that both parties should be uncommitted and that neither should exert the pressure of force on the other. That is true in any circumstances. But as between a subject and the state which rules him, the position is still more emphatic. It is not for the subject to deal with the state on equal terms, still less to approach it with an open threat.'

"At the outset, let me make one correction. The resolution did not 'declare' mass rebellion. It merely sanctioned the 'starting of a mass struggle on non-violent line on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilize all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last twenty-two years of peaceful struggle.' I was to 'guide the nation in the steps to be taken.' The paragraph sanctioning the mass struggle also 'appeals to Britain and the United Nations in the interest of freedom'.

"Essence of negotiation should undoubtedly be that the parties are uncommitted and that neither 'exerts the pressure of force on the other'. In the case under consideration, the actual position is that one party has overwhelming force at its disposal and the other has none. About non-committal too, the Congress has no commitments except the immediate attainment of freedom. Subject to that, there is the widest latitude for negotiation.

"Your proposition about the subject and the state is, I know, a reply to the cry of 'Quit India'. Only the cry is intrinsically just and the subject and the state formula is too antediluvian to have any real meaning. It is because Congress has felt the subjection of India as an insufferable reproach that it has risen against it. A well ordered state is subject to the people. A well ordered state does

not descend upon the people from above, but the people make and unmake it.

"The resolution of 8th August did not contain any threat open or veiled. It prescribed the limitations under which negotiations could be carried on and its sanction was free of all 'force', that is, violence. It consisted of self-suffering. Instead of appreciating the fact that the Congress laid all its cards on the table, you have given a sinister meaning to the whole movement by drawing unwarranted inferences. In so far as there was any violence after the 8th of August last on the part of any Congressman, it was wholly unauthorized as is clear from the resolution itself. The Government in their wisdom left me no time whatsoever for issuing instructions. The A.-I.C.C. finished after midnight on 8th August. Well, before sunrise on the 9th, I was carried away by the police commissioner without being told what crime I had committed. And so were the members of the Working Committee and the principal Congressmen who happened to be in Bombay. Is it too much when I say that the Government invited violence and did not want the movement to proceed on peaceful lines?

"Now, let me remind you of an occasion of an open rebellion, when you played an important part. I refer to the famous Bardoli satyagraha under Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He was conducting a campaign of civil disobedience. It had evidently reached a stage when the Governor of Bombay felt that there should be a peaceful end to the struggle. You will remember that the result of an interview between His Excellency the then Governor and the Sardar was the appointment of a committee of which you were a distinguished member. And the committee's findings were for the most part in favour of the civil resisters. Of course, you may say, if you wish, that the Governor made a mistake in negotiating with the rebel, and so did you in accepting the appointment. Consider the reverse position, what would have happened if instead of appointing a committee the Governor had attempted heavy repression. Would not the Government have been held responsible for an outbreak of violence if the people had lost self-control?

"17. 'Government does hold Mr. Gandhi responsible for the recent happenings that have so disturbed the peace of India, caused so much loss of life and property of innocent persons and brought the country to the brink of a terrible danger. I do not say he had

any personal complicity in the acts of violence, but it was he that put the match to the train carefully laid beforehand by himself and his colleagues. That he was forced to do so prematurely was not his fault but our fortune. This was the method by which they hoped to gain their ends. They may seek to repudiate it, now that it has proved unsuccessful, but the responsibility is theirs none the less. If Mr. Gandhi wished to dissociate himself from them, he could have spoken for himself without consulting the Working Committee members. Can he then, without cancelling the Congress rebellion, without reparation, without even assurances for the future, claim at any moment to step back as though nothing had happened into the public life of the country and be received by Government and society as a good citizen?'

"I can accept no responsibility for the unfortunate happenings described by you. I have no doubt whatsoever that history will record that the responsibility for the happenings was wholly that of the Government. In the nature of things, I could not put a match to a train which for one thing was never laid. And if the train was never laid, the question of prematureness does not arise. The deprivation of the people of their leaders you may consider 'our fortune'. I consider it a misfortune of the first magnitude for all concerned. I wish to repudiate nothing of what I have done or intended. I have no sense of repentance, for I have no sense of having done any wrong to any person. I have stated times without number that I detest violence in any shape or form. But I can give no opinion about things of which I have no first-hand knowledge. I never asked for permission to consult the Congress Working Committee to enable me to dissociate myself from violence. I asked for permission to see them, if I was expected to make any proposals on behalf of the committee. I cannot cancel the Congress rebellion which is of a purely non-violent character. I am proud of it. I have no reparation to make, for I have no consciousness of guilt. And there can be no question of assurances for the future, when I hold myself guiltless. The question of re-entering the public life of the country or being received by Government and society as a good citizen does not arise. I am quite content to remain a prisoner. I have never thrust myself on the public life of the country or on the Government. I am but a humble servant of India. The only certificate I need is a certificate from the inner voice. I hope you

realize that you gave your audience not the facts but your opinions framed in anger.

"To conclude, why have I written this letter? Not to answer your anger with anger. I have written it in the hope that you may read the sincerity behind my own words. I never despair of converting any person, even an official of the hardest type. General Smuts was converted or say reconciled as he declared in his speech introducing the bill giving relief in terms of the settlement arrived at between him and me in 1914. That he has not fulfilled my hope or that of the Indian settlers, which the settlement had inspired, is a sad story, but it is irrelevant to the present purpose. I can multiply such recollections. But I claim no credit for these conversions or reconciliations. They were wholly due to the working of truth and non-violence expressing themselves through me. I subscribe to the belief or the philosophy that all life in its essence is one and that the humans are working consciously or unconsciously towards the realization of that identity. This belief requires a living faith in a living God who is the ultimate arbiter of our fate. Without Him not a blade of grass moves. My belief requires me not to despair even of converting you, though your speech warrants no such hope. If God has willed it, He may put power in some word of mine which will touch your heart. Mine is but to make the effort. The result is in God's hands."

Congress Responsibility

1943

WITH THOUSANDS of people rotting in jails, situation in the country was worsening. In April 1943, when the Federal Court of India held that the Rule 26 of the Defence of India Act, under which the Congress leaders were detained, was invalid in law, the Government of India issued a fresh ordinance to legalize the illegality. Bengal suffered from the Government excesses, Japanese air raids, cyclone and famine. There was disorder in Sind, and the rising of the Hurs was put down with heavy hand. In May, the ex-Premier, Allah Baksh, was set upon by four men near Shikarpur and shot dead. Intolerance, injustice and corruption prevailed everywhere. People felt helpless without Gandhi.

In the months of June and July, all kinds of rumours appeared in the press to the effect that Gandhi had written to the Government withdrawing the August Resolution. Gandhi requested the Government to contradict these reports, as he had neither the desire nor the authority to withdraw the resolution. "My personal opinion is that the resolution was the only one the A.-I.C.C. could have passed, if the Congress was to make any effective contribution to the cause of human freedom which is involved in the immediate independence of India." The Government turned down his request to contradict the rumours.

The Government's indictment of the Congress and of Gandhi, *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, 86-page booklet, published during the fast, reached Aga Khan Palace in late April, after persistent requests to Sir Richard Tottenham on behalf of Gandhi. After forty-eight days of intense work, Gandhi sent a long reply to the indictment on July 15. Extracts from his writings had been torn from their context and a sinister meaning put upon them by presenting them in a false setting. Gandhi in his reply restored them to their proper context and elucidated the true meaning. A lot of

space had to be devoted to an analysis of the technique of deliberate misquotation, distortion, innuendo, *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi* employed by the writer of the pamphlet. Gandhi began his reply, running into seventy-seven paras, addressed to the Additional Secretary to the Government of India, as follows:

"In reply to my request dated 5th March last for a copy of the Government of India publication entitled *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances,* 1942-43, I received a copy on April 13. It contains several corrections marked in red ink. Some of them are striking.

"2. I take it that the Government have based the charges made in the publication against the Congress and myself on the material printed therein and not on the evidence which, as stated in the preface, is withheld from the public.

"3. The preface is brief and is signed by Sir R. Tottenham, the Additional Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department. It is dated 13th February last, that is, three days after the commencement of my recent fast. The date is ominous. Why was the period of my fast chosen for publishing a document in which I am the target?

"4. The preface commences thus: 'In response to demands which have reached the Government from several sources, the Government have now prepared a review which brings together a number of facts . . . bearing on the responsibility of Mr. Gandhi and of the Congress High Command for the disturbances which followed the sanctioning of a mass movement by the All-India Congress Committee on August 8, 1942.'

"There is an obvious mis-statement here. The disturbances followed not the 'sanctioning of the mass movement by the A.-I.C.C.' but the arrests made by the Government. As for the 'demands', so far as I am aware, they began soon after the wholesale arrests of the principal Congressmen all over India. As the Government are aware, in my letters to H. E. the Viceroy, the last being dated the 7th February 1943, I had asked for proof in support of my alleged guilt. The evidence now produced might have been given to me when I raised the question. Had my request been complied with, one advantage would certainly have accrued. I would have been heard in answer to the charges brought against me. That very process would have delayed the fast, and who knows, if Government had been patient with me, it might have even prevented it.

"5. The preface contains the following sentence: 'Almost all the facts presented in this review are, or should be, already within the knowledge of the public.' Therefore, so far as the public are concerned, there was no such hurry as to require publication of the document during the fast. This train of reasoning has led me to the inference that it was published in expectation of my death which medical opinion must have considered almost a certainty. It was feared even during my previous long fasts. I hope my inference is wholly wrong and the Government had a just and valid reason for choosing the time that they did, for the publication of what is after all an indictment of the Congress and me. I hope to be pardoned for putting on paper an inference, which if true, must discredit the Government. I feel that I am being just to them by unburdening myself of a suspicion instead of harbouring it and allowing it to cloud my judgement about their dealings with me.

"6. I now come to the indictment itself. It reads like a presentation of his case by a prosecutor. In the present case the prosecutor happens to be also the policeman and jailor. He first arrests and gags his victims, and then opens his case behind their backs.

"7. I have read it again. I have gone through the numbers of *Harijan* which my companions happened to have with them, and I have come to the conclusion that there is nothing in my writings and my doings that could have warranted the inferences and the innuendoes of which the indictment is full. In spite of my desire to see myself in my writings as the author has seen me, I have failed completely.

"8. The indictment opens with a misrepresentation. I am said to have deplored 'the introduction of foreign soldiers into India to aid in India's defence'. In the *Harijan* article on which the charge is based, I have refused to believe that India was to be defended through the introduction of foreign soldiers. If it is India's defence that is aimed at, why should trained Indian soldiers be sent away from India and foreign soldiers brought in instead? Why should the Congress—an organization which was born and lives for the very sake of India's freedom—be suppressed? I am clearer today in my mind than I was when I penned that article on 16th April, that India is not being defended, and that if things continue to shape themselves as they are, she will sink at the end of war deeper than she is today, so that she might forget the very word freedom.

"9. The second paragraph of the indictment opens with this pregnant sentence: 'It will be suggested that during the period of Mr. Gandhi's first advocacy of British withdrawal from India and the meeting of the A.-I.C.C. in Bombay on August 7, the Congress High Command and in the later stages the Congress organization as a whole were deliberately setting the stage for a mass movement designed to free India finally from British rule.'

"Let me underline the phrase 'it will be suggested'. Why should anything be left to suggestion about a movement which is open and above-board? Much ado has been made about the simplest things which nobody has cared to deny and of which the Congressmen are even proud. The Congress organization as a whole 'deliberately set the stage designed to free India finally from British rule', as early as the year 1920, and not since my 'first advocacy of the British withdrawal from India' as suggested in the indictment. Ever since that year, the effort for a movement has never relaxed. This can be proved from numerous speeches of the Congress leaders and from the Congress resolutions. Young and impatient Congressmen and even elder men have not hesitated at times to press me to hasten the mass movement. But I, who knew better, always restrained their ardour, and I must gratefully admit that they gladly submitted to the restraint. The contraction of this long period to the interval between my advocacy of British withdrawal from India and the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay on August 7, is wholly wrong and misleading. I know of no special staging since 26th April, 1942.

"10. The same paragraph then says that 'an essential preliminary' to an examination of the type of movement 'is a clear understanding of the real motives underlying the move'. Why should motives be searched when everything is there in black and white? I can say without any hesitation that my motives are always plain. Why I asked for the immediate withdrawal of the British power from India has been discussed by me almost threadbare in public.

"11. At page 2 of the indictment, a phrase has been taken from my article entitled 'One Thing Needful' dated 10th May 1942, and I am represented as saying that I would devote the whole of my energy 'to this supreme act'. By simply detaching the phrase from its context, mystery has been made to surround it. For, the phrase 'supreme act' occurs in an argument addressed to an English friend

and, if it is read in its setting, it ceases to be mysterious or objectionable, unless the very idea of withdrawal is held objectionable . . . The whole of the movement has been conceived for the mutual benefit of India and England. Unfortunately, the author, ignoring this background, has approached my writings with coloured spectacles, has torn sentences and phrases from their context, and has dressed them up to suit his preconception. Thus he has put out of joint 'their withdrawal removes the bait', and omitted the sentence that immediately follows and which I have restored in the foregoing extract. As is clear from the above article, unadulterated non-co-operation here refers exclusively to the Japanese."

A flagrant case of misquotation was held up in para 34, where the "famous words" attributed to Gandhi—"There is no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation. There is no question of one more chance. After all it is an open rebellion"—were shown to be "partly a distortion and partly an interpolation", not to be found in the authentic published report of the Wardha interview. Not satisfied with giving a wrong quotation when the correct text was before him, the writer had tacked on to it two more apocryphal sentences from an unauthentic Associated Press report and quoted them without asterisks between sentences that appeared apart in the Associated Press report.

Paras 12 to 16 refuted the charge that Gandhi had asked for the physical withdrawal of the British from India. What he had asked for was the withdrawal of British power, not of individual Englishmen. He had even agreed to the use of India as a base for military operations against Japan. Charges against the Congress and Gandhi of being defeatists and pro-Japanese were dealt with in the paras 18 to 40. Far from being "convinced that Axis would win the war", he had proclaimed the contrary belief from the house-top.

In para 40, Gandhi restated some of his views:

"1. I believe that non-violence alone is capable of defending India, not only against Japan but the whole world.

"2. I do hold that Britain is incapable of defending India. She is not defending India today; she is defending herself and her interests in India and elsewhere. These are often contrary to India's.

"3. 'Quit India' move was intended to result in the withdrawal of the British power, if possible, with simultaneous formation of a provisional government, consisting of members representing all the

principal parties, if the withdrawal took place by the willing consent of the British Government. If, however, the withdrawal took place willynilly, there might be a period of anarchy.

"4. The Indian army would naturally be disbanded, being British creation, unless it forms part of the allied troops, or it transfers its allegiance to the free India government.

"5. Allied troops would remain under terms agreed to between the allied powers and the free India government.

"6. If India became free, the free India government would tender co-operation by rendering such military aid as it could. But in the largest part of India where no military effort was possible, non-violent action will be taken by the masses of the people with the utmost enthusiasm."

Paras 45 to 63 contained a detailed reply to the accusation that either Gandhi or the Congress had planned or precipitated a conflict or sanctioned or shown a readiness to condone violence. The education given by the Congress to the people had been wholly non-violent. In the past whenever outbreaks had occurred, the most energetic measures had been taken by the whole of the Congress organization to deal with them. On several occasions, Gandhi had himself resorted to fasting. He had even said that if the Congressmen indulged in an orgy of violence, they might not find him alive in their midst. The exhortation to every Congressman to consider himself free to act for himself under certain circumstances and the use of military terms in connection with the contemplated struggle was wholly innocent and apt when coupled with the condition of non-violence. Para 63 of Gandhi's reply read as follows:

"Independently of the argument in the indictment, I must now say something about non-violence as I know it. Its spread in all walks of life has been my mission from my early youth. This covers a period of very nearly sixty years. It was adopted at my instance as a policy by the Congress in 1920. In its very nature, it was not meant to be paraded before the world, but it was accepted as a means indispensable for the attainment of swaraj. Congressmen saw at an early date that its mere adoption on paper had no value. It was of use only in so far as it was put into practice individually and collectively. It was of no more use as a badge than a rifle in the hands of a person who did not know how to use it effectively on due occasion. Therefore, if non-violence has raised the Congress

prestige and popularity since its adoption, it has done so in exact proportion to its use, even as the power which the rifle gives to its possessor is in exact proportion to its effective use. The comparison cannot be carried very far. Thus while violence is directed towards the injury, including the destruction, of aggressor, and is successful only when it is stronger than that of the opponent, non-violent action can be taken in respect of an opponent, however powerfully organized for violence. Violence *per se* of the weak has never been known to succeed against the stronger in violence. Success of non-violent action of the very weak is a daily occurrence. I make bold to say that I have applied to the present struggle the principles of non-violence as enunciated here. Nothing could be farther from my thought than injury to the person or property of those who are manning and regulating the machinery of British imperialism as it operates in India. My non-violence draws a fundamental distinction between the man and his machine. I would destroy a harmful machine without compunction, never the man. And this rule I have enforced in my dealings with my nearest relatives as also friends and associates, not without considerable success."

Gandhi left unanswered that part of the indictment which dealt with the nature of the disturbances, etc., as he could not properly do so on the strength of one-sided statements and unauthenticated documents. The question of responsibility for the disturbances was dealt with in paras 67 to 73. The concluding part of Gandhi's reply beginning from para 66 read as follows:

"66. One searches in vain in the indictment for a detailed account of the measures taken by the Government by way of reprisals. And if one is to believe what has been allowed to appear in the press about these measures, the so-called misdeeds of exasperated people, whether they can be described as Congressmen or not, pale into insignificance.

"67. Now for the responsibility for happenings after the wholesale arrests of the 9th August last. The most natural way to look at the disturbances is that they broke out after the arrests which were, therefore, the cause. The indictment has been framed for the sole purpose, as the title shows, of fastening the responsibility on the Congress. The argument seems to me to be this. First, I and then the Congress had been setting the stage for a mass movement since April 1942, when I first bruited the idea of the British withdrawal

popularly known as 'Quit India'. The mass movement was bound to result in the outbreak of violence. I and the Congressmen who had accepted my guidance had intended that violence should take place. Leaders had been preaching it. Hence the disturbances were to take place in any case. The arrests, therefore, merely anticipated the violent movement and nipped it in the bud. This sums up the reasoning in the indictment.

"68. I have endeavoured to show that no special stage for a mass movement was set or contemplated because of my proposal for the British withdrawal, that violence was never contemplated by me or any Congress leader, that I had declared that, if Congressmen indulged in an orgy of violence, they might not find me alive in their midst, that the mass movement was never started by me, the sole charge for starting it was vested in me, that I had contemplated negotiations with the Government, that I was to start the movement only on failure of negotiations, and that I had envisaged an interval of 'two or three weeks' for the negotiations. It is, therefore, clear that but for the arrests no such disturbances would have taken place as happened on 9th August last and after. I would have strained every nerve first to make negotiations successful, and secondly, if I had failed, to avoid the disturbances. The Government would have been no less able to suppress them than they were in August last. Only they would have had some case against me and the Congress. It was the duty of the Government, before taking action, to study the speeches of the Congress leaders and myself at the All-India Congress Committee meeting.

"69. The Congress leaders were all desirous that the movement should remain non-violent, if only because they knew that no violent movement in the existing circumstances could possibly succeed when matched against a most powerfully equipped Government. Whatever violence was committed by the people, whether Congressmen or others, was, therefore, committed in spite of the wishes of the leaders. If it is held otherwise by the Government, it should be proved beyond doubt before an impartial tribunal. But why seek to shift the responsibility when the cause is patent? Government action in enforcing India-wide arrests was so violent that the populace which was in sympathy with the Congress lost control. The loss of self-control cannot imply the Congress complicity, but it does imply that the power of endurance of human nature has

limitations. If Government action was in excess of the endurance of human nature, it and, therefore, its authors were responsible for the explosions that followed. But the Government may assert that the arrests were necessary. If so, why should the Government fight shy of taking the responsibility for the consequences of their action? The wonder to me is that the Government at all need to justify their action, when they know that their will is law.

"70. Let me analyse the system of Government in vogue here. A population numbering nearly four hundred millions of people, belonging to an ancient civilization, are being ruled by a British representative called Viceroy and Governor-General aided by 250 officials called collectors and supported by a strong British garrison with a large number of Indian soldiers, trained by British officers, and carefully isolated from the populace. The Viceroy enjoys within his own sphere powers much larger than the King of England. Such powers, as far as I know, are not enjoyed by any other person in the world. The collectors are miniature Viceroys in their own spheres. They are first and foremost, as the name implies, collectors of revenue in their own districts and have magisterial powers. They can requisition the military to their aid, when they think necessary. They are also political agents for the small chieftains within their jurisdiction, and they are in the place of overlords to them.

"71. Contrast this with the Congress, the most truly democratic organization in the world—not because of its numerical strength, but because its only sanction deliberately adopted is non-violence. From its very inception, the Congress has been a democratic body, seeking to represent all India. However feeble and imperfect the attempt may have been, the Congress has never in its history of now nearly sixty years shifted its gaze from the pole-star of India's freedom. It has progressed from stage to stage in its march towards democracy in the truest term. If it is said, as it has been said, that the Congress learnt the spirit of democracy from Great Britain—no Congressman would care to deny the statement—though it must be added that the roots were to be found in the old panchayat system. It can never brook Nazi, fascist or Japanese domination. An organization whose very breath is freedom and which pits itself against the most powerfully organized imperialism, will perish to a man in the attempt to resist all domination. So long as it clings to non-violence, it will be uncrushable and unconquerable.

"72. What can be the cause of extraordinary resentment against the Congress into which the Government have betrayed themselves? I have never known them before to exhibit so much irritation. Does the cause lie in the 'Quit India' formula? Disturbances cannot be the cause, because the resentment began to show itself soon after the publication of my proposal for the British withdrawal. It crystallized into the wholesale arrests of 9th August last which were pre-arranged and merely awaited the passing of the resolution of 8th August. Yet there was nothing novel in the resolution save the 'Quit India' formula. Mass movements have been known to be on the Congress programme ever since 1920. But freedom seemed elusive. Now the Hindu-Muslim disunity, now the pledges to the princes, now the interests of the Scheduled Classes, now the vested interests of the Europeans barred the gateway to freedom. 'Divide and Rule' was an inexhaustible well. The sands of time were running out. Rivers of blood were flowing fast among warring nations and politically-minded India was looking on helplessly—the masses were inert. Hence the cry of 'Quit India'. This gave body to the freedom movement. The cry was unanswerable. Those who were anxious to play their part in the world crisis found vent in that cry of anguish. Its root is in the will to save democracy from Nazisms as well as imperialism. For, the satisfaction of the Congress demand meant assurance of victory of democracy over any combination of reactionary forces and deliverance of China and Russia from the menace of Japan and Germany respectively. But the demand irritated the Government. They distrusted those who were associated with the demand and thereby they themselves became the greatest impediment to the war effort. It is wrong, therefore, to accuse the Congress of hindering war effort. Congress activity up to the night of 8th August was confined to resolutions only. The dawn of the 9th saw the Congress imprisoned. What next followed was a direct result of the Government action.

"73. The resentment over what I hold to be a just and honourable desire confirms the popular suspicion about the bona fides of Government's professions about democracy and freedom after the war. If the Government were sincere, they would have welcomed the offer of help made by the Congress. The Congressmen who have been fighting for India's liberty for over half a century would have flocked to the allied banner as one man for the defence of India's

freedom newly won. But the Government did not wish to treat India as an equal partner and an ally. They put out of action those who made this demand. Some of them are even being hounded, as if they were dangerous criminals. I have in mind Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and others like him. A reward of Rs.5,000, now doubled, has been promised to the informant who would show his hiding place. I have taken Shri Jayaprakash Narayan purposely as my illustration because, as he very rightly says, he differs from me on several fundamentals. But my differences, great as they are, do not blind me to his indomitable courage and his sacrifice of all that a man holds dear for the love of his country. I have read his manifesto which is given as an appendix to the indictment. Though I cannot subscribe to some of the views expressed therein, it breathes nothing but burning patriotism and his impatience of foreign domination. It is a virtue of which any country would be proud.

"74. So much for the politically-minded Congressmen. In the constructive department of the Congress also, the Government have deprived themselves of the best talent in the country for the organization of the hand industries which are so vital a need in war time. The All-India Spinners' Association, which is responsible for having distributed without fuss over three crores of rupees as wages among the poor villagers, whom no one had reached and whose labour was being wasted, has come in for a heavy hand. Its president Shri Jajuji and many of his co-workers have been imprisoned without trial and without any known reason. The khadi centres which are trust property have been confiscated to the Government. I do not know the law under which such property can be confiscated. And the tragedy is that the confiscators are themselves unable to run those centres which were producing and distributing cloth. Khadi and the charkhas have been reported to have been burnt by the authorities. The All-India Village Industries Association worked by Kumarappa brothers has also received much the same treatment. Shri Vinoba Bhave is an institution by himself. Many workers were incessantly doing creative labour under his guidance. Most men and women of the constructive organizations are not political workers. They are devoted to constructive work of the highest merit. And if some of them have found it necessary to appear at all on the political field, it is a matter for the Government to reflect upon. To put such organizations and their supervisors under duress is in my

opinion an unpardonable interference with the war effort. The self-satisfaction with which the highest officials proclaim that limitless men and material are being had from this unhappy land is truly amazing, while the inhabitants of India are suffering from shortage of food and clothing and many other necessaries of life. I make bold to say that this scarcity would have been largely minimized, if not altogether obviated, if instead of imprisoning the Congress workers throughout India, the Government had utilized their services. The Government had two striking illustrations of the efficient working by the Congress agency—I mean the handling of the disastrous earthquake in Bihar by Congressmen under Dr. Rajendra Prasad and of the equally disastrous flood in Gujarat under Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

"75. This brings me to the end of my reply to the indictment. It has become much longer than I had wanted to make it. It has cost me and my co-workers in the camp no end of labour. Although I must ask, in fairness to myself and the cause I represent, for the publication of this reply, my chief purpose is to carry conviction to the Government that the indictment contains no proof of the allegations against the Congress and me. The Government know that the public in India seem to have distrusted the indictment and regarded it as designed for foreign propaganda. Men like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and the Rt. Hon. Shri M. R. Jayakar have given their opinion that the 'evidence' produced in the indictment is of no judicial value. Therefore, the Government should withdraw the indictment. I see from the preface to the indictment that Government have in their possession 'valuable evidence', presumably incriminating the detenus. I submit that if the Government cannot safely divulge the evidence, they should discharge the detenus and bring to book those who, after discharge, may be caught in the act of committing or promoting crimes. With limitless power at their back, they need not resort to unsustainable accusations.

"76. It will be noticed that although the indictment is a Government publication, I have only criticized its unknown author in the fond hope that the individual members composing the Government of India have not read the originals on which the indictment is based. For, I am of opinion that no one having a knowledge of the originals could possibly endorse the inferences and innuendoes with which it is replete.

"77. Lastly, I wish to state that if I have anywhere erred in analysing the indictment, and if my error is pointed out to me, I shall gladly correct myself. I have simply written as I have felt."

After a lapse of three months, Gandhi received the following rejoinder from Sir Richard Tottenham:

"At the outset, I am to remind you that the document was published for the information of the public and not for the purpose of convincing you or for eliciting your defence. It was supplied to you only at your request and in forwarding it, the Government neither invited nor desired your comments on it. Since, however, you have thought fit to address Government on the subject, I am to say that Government have given due consideration to your letter.

"The Government regret to observe that, although your letter contains lengthy quotations from your own utterances and writings, it contains no fresh or categorical statement of your own attitude in regard to the material issues or any clear repudiation of the disastrous policy to which you and the Congress party committed yourselves in the series of events leading to the Congress resolution of the 8th August 1942. The purpose of your letter appears to be to suggest that you have been misrepresented in some way in *Congress Responsibility*, but in what substantial respect is not clear. No attempt was made in it, as you seem to think, to charge you with pro-Japanese sympathies and the sentence at the end of the first chapter, to which you have taken exception in paragraph 18 of your letter, was merely an echo of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's own words quoted on the previous page. He has not, as you wrongly allege, repudiated those words in the published statements to which you refer. It was, however, one of the purposes of the book to find an explanation of your actions in your own defeatist outlook towards the threat from Japan and your fear that, unless the allied forces withdrew in time, India would become a battlefield in which the Japanese would ultimately win. This feeling was attributed to you by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru himself in the course of his remarks to which reference has been made above and your own draft of the Allahabad resolution makes it quite plain that, both in the 'Quit India' campaign and the Congress resolution which was intended to enforce it, your object was to be left in a position in which you and the Congress would be free to make terms with Japan. The Government of India note that your letter makes no attempt to

meet this imputation, which they still regard as true. It is the only explanation which is consistent with your own statement that 'the presence of the British in India is an invitation to the Japanese to invade India. Their withdrawal removes the bait.' Nor have you been able to explain on any other theory than that suggested in the book the contradiction between this statement and your subsequent avowal of your willingness to permit the retention of allied troops on Indian soil.

"The Government of India are not disposed to follow you into the various verbal points that you have raised. They do not deny that, owing to your habit of reinterpreting your own statements to suit the purposes of the moment, it is easy for you to quote passages from your utterances and writings which are in apparent contradiction to any view attributed to you. But the fact that you admit the discovery of important gaps in them, or that you have found it necessary from time to time to put glosses on what you have said is of itself evidence of the incredible levity with which, in a moment of grave crisis, you made pronouncements in regard to matters of the most vital importance in India's defence and her internal peace. Government can only interpret your statements in the plain sense of the words as it would appear to any honest or unbiased reader and they are satisfied that the book *Congress Responsibility* contains no material misinterpretation of the general trend of your utterances during the relevant period.

"You have devoted considerable space in your letter to an apparent attempt to disown the phrase attributed to you in the A.P.I. report of a press conference which you held at Wardha on the 14th of July 1942, where you are reported to have said: 'There is no question of one more chance. After all it is an open rebellion.' This press message was reproduced at the time in newspapers throughout India. You now wish the Government of India to believe that you first became aware of it on the 26th June 1943. They can only regard it as highly improbable that, if it did not correctly represent what you said, it should not have been brought to your notice at the time or that you should have left it uncontradicted during the following weeks while you were still at liberty.

"The Government of India also note that you still seek to cast on the Government the responsibility for disturbances for reasons which they can only regard as trivial and which have already been

answered in your published correspondence with His Excellency the Viceroy. The point which is clearly established by the book entitled *Congress Responsibility* is that those disturbances were the natural and predictable consequences of your declaration of an 'open rebellion' and the propaganda which preceded it. That you yourself could have foreseen those consequences is clear from the statement which you yourself made in the court in 1922, when you admitted the impossibility of dissociating yourself from the 'diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura and the mad outrages of Bombay' and went on to say that you knew that you were playing with fire but that you had taken the risk and that you would do so again. If you now contend that the consequences were unintended and unforeseen, this fact is itself an admission of your own inability to judge the reactions of your followers. And you now seek to excuse, if not to defend, the barbarities committed in your own name and that of the Congress rather than to condemn them. It is clear where your sympathies lie. Your letter does not contain one word of explanation of your own message 'Do or Die', nor does it throw any light on your message which, if you cannot disown it, is sufficient to refute your contention that no movement had been launched by you at the time when the disturbances took place.

"I am finally to refer to your request for the publication of your letter. In the first place, I am to remind you of your own position, which has already been explained to you, namely, that, so long as the grounds of your detention remain unchanged, the Government are not prepared to afford you facilities for communication with the general public, nor are they prepared themselves to act as agents for your propaganda. In the second place, I am to point out that you had ample opportunities during the months preceding the Congress resolution of the 8th August 1942 to make your meaning unequivocally clear before you were arrested. The fact that your own followers interpreted your intentions in the same way as the Government leaves no scope for further explanations. I am to inform you, therefore, that the Government do not propose to publish your letter unless and until they think fit. Their decision is, however, without prejudice to the freedom of the Government to use at any time and in any manner which the Government think fit the various admissions contained in the communication which you have voluntarily addressed to them.

"To the extent that your present letter may be designed to relieve you of responsibility for the Congress rebellion and the connected events that have taken place, Government regret that they cannot accept it as in any way relieving you of that responsibility, or indeed, to their regret, as a serious attempt to justify yourself. They observe again with regret that you have taken no steps in your letter to dissociate yourself personally from the Congress resolution of 8th August 1942, to condemn unequivocally the violent outrages which took place in your name after the passing of that resolution, to declare yourself unequivocally in favour of the use of all the resources of India for the prosecution of the war against the Axis powers and in particular Japan, until victory is won; and to give satisfactory assurances for good conduct in future. And in absence of any change of mind on your part and of any disclaimer of the policy as the result of which it has been necessary to restrain your movements and those of the Working Committee of the Congress, the Government are unable to take any further action on your present communication."

On October 26, Gandhi sent his reply:

"Your letter makes it clear that my reply to the charges brought against me in the Government publication *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, 1942-1943, has failed in its purpose, namely, to convince the Government of my innocence of those charges. Even my good faith is impugned.

"I observe too that the Government did not desire 'comments' upon the charges. The previous pronouncements of the Government on such matters had led me to think otherwise. Be that as it may, your current letter seems to invite an answer.

"In my opinion, I have, in my letter of 15th July last, unequivocally answered all charges referred to in your letter under reply. I have no regret for what I have done or said in the course of the struggle for India's freedom.

"As to the Congress resolution of 8th August 1942, apart from my belief that it is not only harmless but good all round, I have no legal power to alter it in any way. That can only be done by the body that passed that resolution—the A.-I.C.C. which is no doubt guided by its Working Committee. And as the Government are aware I offered to meet the members of the Working Committee in order to discuss the situation and to know their mind. But my

offer was rejected. I had thought and still think that my talk with them might have some value from the Government standpoint. Hence I repeat my offer. But it may have no such value so long as the Government doubt my bona fides. As a satyagrahi, however, in spite of the handicap, I must reiterate what I hold to be good and of immediate importance in terms of war effort. But if my offer has no chance of being accepted so long as I retain my present views, and if the Government think that it is only my evil influence that corrupts people, I submit that the members of the Working Committee and other detenus should be discharged. It is unthinkable that, when India's millions are suffering from preventable starvation and thousands are dying of it, thousands of men and women should be kept in detention on mere suspicion, when their energy and the expense incurred in keeping them under duress could, at this critical time, be usefully employed in relieving the distress. As I have said in my letter of 15th July last, Congressmen abundantly proved their administrative, creative and humanitarian worth at the time of the last terrible flood in Gujarat and equally terrible earthquake in Bihar. The huge place in which I am being detained with a large guard around me, I hold to be waste of public funds. I should be quite content to pass my days in any prison.

"As to 'satisfactory assurances' about my 'good conduct', I can only say that I am unaware of any unworthy conduct at any time. I presume that the impression the Government have of my conduct is referable to the charges mentioned in the indictment, as I have succinctly called *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, 1942-43. And since I have not only denied the charges *in toto* but on the contrary have ventured to bring countercharges against the Government, I think that they should agree to refer both to an impartial tribunal. Seeing that a big political organization and not a mere individual is involved in the charges, I hold that it should be a vital part of the war effort to have the issue decided by a tribunal, if mutual discussion and effort are considered by the Government to be undesirable and/or futile.

"Whilst your letter rejects my request that my letter of July 15 last should in fairness to me be published, you inform me that their decision in this matter, however, 'is without prejudice to the freedom of the Government to use at any time and in any manner which they think fit the various admissions contained in the

communication which you have voluntarily addressed to them.' I can only hope that this does not mean that, as in the case of the *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, the garbled extracts will be published. My request is that my letter should be published in full, if and when the Government think fit to make public use of it."

Gandhi's reaction to the Government attitude was best reflected in his letter addressed to Lord Linlithgow in late September:

"On the eve of your departure from India I would like to send you a word.

"Of all the high functionaries I have had the honour of knowing none has been the cause of such deep sorrow to me as you have been. It has cut me to the quick to have to think of you as having countenanced untruth and that regarding one whom you at one time considered as your friend. I hope and pray that God will some day put it into your heart to realize that you, a representative of a great nation, had been led into a grievous error."

The Viceroy replied: "I am indeed sorry that your feelings about any deeds or words of mine should be as you describe. But I must be allowed, as gently as I may, to make plain to you that I am unable to accept your interpretation of the events in question. As for the corrective virtues of time and reflection, they are ubiquitous in their operation, and wisely to be rejected by no man."

In the last quarter of 1943, the famine in Bengal had reached its peak. But it was not until November, when the death-roll in Bengal had reached fifteen lakhs, that the famine was fully debated in the Parliament. Mr. Amery held out no hope of a real solution whilst the war continued. "There will soon be a famine," Gandhi had predicted in March. And he hinted that, "If I were set free I would do what I could to remove its causes." This offer to help feed the hungry was rejected. Gandhi remained a prisoner.

Death Of Kasturba

1944

Gandhi had come to the conclusion that he would be kept under detention for many more years to come. He had prepared a timetable and followed it scrupulously. He maintained the diary of his daily caloric intake to make sure that he took not a calorie in excess of the strict requirement of the body. His prayers and daily walks took place at a fixed hour and he devoted the rest of his time to writing and serious reading. Religious literature he read as in his previous jail sojourn, but now he studied also books on anatomy, grammar and economics. He read Shakespeare, Browning, Bernard Shaw, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Karl Marx's *Capital*, volume one, he read in Aga Khan Palace for the first time at the age of seventy-four. "I could have written it better," he said, "assuming, of course, I had the leisure for study Marx has put in." He added: "I do not care whether Marxism is right or wrong. All I know is that the poor are being crushed. Something has got to be done for them. To me this is axiomatic." He edited a few chapters of the Ramayana and Bhagawat for the benefit of Kasturbai. Here, for the first time, he had some leisure to think of his wife's education. He sat with her daily and gave her lessons in Gujarati grammar, poetry, history and geography.

The programme of teaching did not continue long. Old Kasturbai was not keeping well from the very outset. Her mental worries had made her morose. The death of Mahadev Desai was a heavy blow to her from which she never recovered. She used to blame her husband for sending to jail thousands of young men and women and Gandhi had to argue with her justifying his "Quit India" stand. His twenty-one days' fast had caused her great mental anxiety. She wanted to die before her husband.

Kasturbai's health began to deteriorate fast. In December 1943 the Government had to issue a communique on her ill health. It

said *inter alia*: "Her release would, however, involve separating her from her husband during her illness." The Government indicated great reluctance to allow outside medical help or nursing facilities. As a result, Gandhi addressed the following letter to the Government of India on January 27, 1944:

"Some days ago, Shri Kasturbai Gandhi told the Inspector-General of Prisons and Col. Shah that Dr. Dinshah Mehta of Poona be invited to assist in her treatment. Nothing seems to have come out of her request. She has become insistent now and asked me if I had written to the Government in the matter. I, therefore, ask for immediate permission to bring in Dr. Mehta. She has also told me and my son that she would like to have some Ayurvedic physician to see her. I suggest that the I.G.P. be authorized to permit such assistance when requested.

"I have no reply as yet to my request that Shri Kanu Gandhi, who is being permitted to visit the patient every alternate day, be allowed to remain in the camp as a whole-time nurse. The patient shows no signs of recovery and the night nursing is becoming more and more exacting. Kanu Gandhi is an ideal nurse, having nursed the patient before. And what is more, he can soothe her by giving her instrumental music and by singing *bhajans*. I request an early relief to relieve the existing pressure. The matter may be treated as very urgent.

"The superintendent of the camp informs me that when visitors come, one nurse only can be present. Hitherto, more than one nurse have attended when necessary. The superintendent has used his discretion as to the necessity. But when difficulty arose, I made a reference to the I.G.P. The result was that an order was issued that a doctor in addition may be present. I submit that the order has been issued in ignorance or disregard of the condition of the patient. She often requires to be helped by more persons than one. Therefore, I ask that there should be no restriction as to the number of the attendants.

"It would be wrong on my part, if I suppressed the fact that, in the facilities being allowed to the patient, grace has been sadly lacking. The order about attendants is the most glaring instance of pin-pricks, besides being in defeat of the purpose for which attendance during the visits of relatives is allowed. Again, my three sons are in Poona. The eldest, Harilal, who is almost lost to us, was not

allowed yesterday, the reason being that the I.G.P. had no instructions to allow him to come again. And yet the patient was naturally anxious to meet him. To cite one more pin-prick, every time the visitors who are on the permitted list come, they have to apply to the Government Office, Bombay, for permission. The consequence is that there is unnecessary delay and heart-burning. The difficulty arises because neither the superintendent nor the I.G.P. has any function except that of passing on my requests to Bombay.

"I am aware that Shri Kasturba is a Government patient, and that even as her husband I should have no say about her. But, as the Government have been pleased to say that, instead of being discharged, she is being kept with me in her own interest, perhaps in interpreting her wishes and feelings I am doing what the Government would desire and appreciate. Her recovery or at least mental peace, when she is lingering, is common cause between the Government and me. Any jar tells on her."

After a couple of reminders and a lapse of one week the Government conceded some of his demands. The Ayurvedic physician was allowed to examine Kasturbai but was not allowed to stay on the premises, though his attendance was needed very often. He had to rest in his car in front of Aga Khan Palace and was allowed inside after protracted delay. Disgusted with procrastination, Gandhi sent the following request on February 16:

"The patient's nights are much worse than her days and it is essentially at night that constant attendance is necessary. The Vaidyaraj should be permitted to remain in the camp day and night. If the Government cannot agree to this, they may release the patient on parole. If neither of these two proposals are acceptable to the Government, I request that I be relieved of the responsibility of looking after the patient. I ask for my removal to any other place. I must not be made a helpless witness of the agonies the patient is passing through."

By February 20, Kasturbai's condition was declared very grave. Devadas Gandhi was for penicillin injections as a last remedy, but his father advised against it. "You can't cure your mother now," said Gandhi, "no matter what wonder drugs you may muster. I will yield to you if you insist. But you are hopelessly wrong. She has refused all medicines and water these two days. She is in God's hands now. You may interfere, if you wish to, but I advise against

the course you are adopting. And remember you are seeking to cause physical pain by an injection every four or six hours to a dying mother."

Most of the time Gandhi sat by the side of his ailing wife. Their sixty-two years' partnership ended on February 22 when Kasturbai breathed her last lying on the lap of her husband.

On inquiry from the Government, Gandhi expressed his wishes with regard to Kasturbai's funeral rites:

"Her body should be handed over to my sons and relatives which would mean a public funeral without interference from Government. If that is not possible, the funeral should take place as in the case of Mahadev Desai and if the Government will allow relatives only to be present at the funeral, I shall not be able to accept the privilege, unless all friends, who are as good as relatives to me, are also allowed to be present.

"If this also is not acceptable to the Government, then those who have been allowed to visit her will be sent away by me and only those who are in the camp—detenus—will attend the funeral.

"This has been, as you will be able to bear witness, my great anxiety not to make any political capital out of this most trying illness of my life companion. But I have always wanted whatever the Government did to be done with good grace, which I am afraid, has been hitherto lacking. It is not too much to expect that now that the patient is no more, whatever the Government decide about the funeral will be done with good grace."

Gandhi kept vigil that night. The next day, on February 23, the gates of Aga Khan Palace were thrown open to about 150 relatives and friends to enable them to attend the funeral rites. Gandhi kept seated near Kasturbai's body in deep meditation. Now and then, he looked to the visitors and greeted them with a nod.

Dressed in a white sari, woven out of yarn spun by Gandhi, and covered with a jail sheet, with *kumkum* annointed on her forehead, Kasturbai looked as though she was sleeping peacefully. Decked with flowers, the bier was carried by her sons and relatives from the palace to the cremation place where Mahadev's last rites were performed. The ceremony itself was a short and simple one.

To begin with there was recitations from the Gita, Koran, Bible and Zend-Avesta. As Kasturbai's body was lifted from the bier and placed on the pyre, Gandhi was visibly moved and with his wrap

he wiped his tears. The priest completed his ceremony, and before the pyre was set ablaze, Gandhi spoke a few faltering words. Ba, he said, had achieved her freedom; she died with "Do or Die" engraved in her heart.

For about six hours, Gandhi stayed near the pyre. Friends were requesting him to go back to the palace and rest, but he refused. Under the blazing sun, he stood leaning on a staff. Later he went and sat under a tree, gazing at the slowly burning body. "At this moment," he said, "how can I separate myself from my old and faithful companion?" Surrounded by friends, he told titbits from her life. It was more or less a touching monologue: "I cannot even imagine life without Ba. She was a part and parcel of myself. Her death will leave a permanent void in my life."

"My mind does not think of anything else but Ba," Gandhi said to Sushila. The table whereupon Kasturbai used to sit or lie down was brought to him and he took his breakfast on it. "This table has become a very valuable thing for me. The picture of Ba reclining her head on it always stands before my eyes." Referring to the last moments of Kasturbai, he observed: "Ba's calling me thus at her last moment and her passing away while lying on my lap is really a wonderful thing. Such a kind of relation between husband and wife does not exist generally among us."

Following the death of Kasturbai, hartal was observed all over India. The Council of State and the Punjab, Bengal, Orissa and the Frontier Assemblies, passed condolence resolutions. Lord Wavell, the new Viceroy, expressed his sympathy in the course of a reply to Gandhi's letter of February 17 which was as follows:

"Although I have had not the pleasure of meeting you, I address you on purpose as 'Dear Friend'. I am looked upon by the representatives of the British Government as a great, if not the greatest enemy, of the British. But, since I regard myself as a friend and a servant of humanity including the British, in token of my goodwill I call you, the foremost representative of the British in India, my 'friend'.

"I have received, in common with some others, a notice informing me for the first time, why I am detained, and conferring on me the right of representation against my detention. I have duly sent my reply, but I have as yet heard nothing from the Government. A reminder too has gone after a wait of thirteen days.

"I have said some only have received notices, because, out of six of us in this camp, only three have received them. I presume that all will receive them in due course. But my mind is filled with the suspicion that notices have been sent as a matter of form only, and not with any intention to do justice. I do not wish to burden this letter with argument. I repeat, what I said in the correspondence with your predecessor, that the Congress and I are wholly innocent of the charges brought against us. Nothing but an impartial tribunal to investigate the Government case and the Congress case against the Government will bring out the truth.

"The speeches recently made on behalf of the Government in the assembly on the release motion, and the gagging order on Sarojini Devi, I consider to be playing with fire. I distinguish between the defeat of Japanese arms and the allied victory. The latter must carry with it the deliverance of India from the foreign yoke. The spirit of India demands complete freedom from all foreign dominance and would, therefore, resist Japanese yoke equally with British or any other. The Congress represents that spirit in full measure. It has grown to be an institution whose roots have gone deep down into the Indian soil. I was, therefore, staggered to read that Government were satisfied with things as they were going. Had they not got from among the Indian people the men and money they wanted? Was not the Government machinery running smooth? This self-satisfaction bodes ill for Britain, India and the world, if it does not quickly give place to a searching of hearts in British high places.

"Promises for the future are valueless in the face of the world struggle in which the fortune of all nations and, therefore, of the whole of humanity is involved. Present performance is the peremptory need of the moment, if the war is to end in world peace and not be a preparation for another war bloodier than the present, if indeed there can be a bloodier. Therefore, a real war effort must mean satisfaction of India's demand. 'Quit India' only gives vivid expression to that demand, and has not the sinister and poisonous meaning attributed to it without warrant by the Government. The expression is charged with the friendliest feeling for Britain in terms of the whole of humanity.

"I have done. I thought that, if I claim to be a friend of the British, as I do, nothing should deter me from sharing my deepest thoughts with you. It is no pleasure for me to be in this camp,

where all my creature comforts are supplied without any effort on my part, when I know that millions outside are starving for want of food. But I should feel utterly helpless, if I went out and missed the food by which alone living becomes worth while."

The Government's attitude, however, remained the same. Many wild statements were made and even uncharitable things were said with regard to the heavy expenses incurred on Gandhi's detention. On March 4, Gandhi addressed the following letter to the Government of India:

"In reply to a question in the assembly, the Hon. Home Member is reported to have said: 'The provision for the expenses of Mr. Gandhi and those detained with him in Aga Khan Palace amounted to about Rs. 550 a month.'

"In my letter to you dated the 26th October last, I remarked as follows: 'The huge place in which I am being detained with a big guard around me, I hold to be waste of public funds. I should be quite content to pass my days in any prison.' The Home Member's reply quoted above is a sharp reminder to me that I should have followed up the remark just referred to by me. But it is never too late to mend. I, therefore, take up the question now.

"The expenses on behalf of my companions and me are not merely Rs. 550 per month. The rent of this huge place—of which only a portion is open to us—and the expense of maintaining the big outer guard and an inner staff consisting of the superintendent, jamadar and sepoys have got to be added. Add to this a large squad of convicts from Yeravda to serve the inmates and to look after the garden. Virtually the whole of this expense is, from my point of view, wholly unnecessary; and when the people are dying of starvation, it is almost a crime against Indian humanity. I ask that my companions and I be removed to any regular prison Government may choose. In conclusion, I cannot conceal from myself the sad thought that the whole of this expense comes from taxes collected from the dumb millions of India."

On March 9, Gandhi wrote a second letter to Lord Wavell:

"I must thank you for your prompt reply. At the outset, I send you and Lady Wavell my thanks for your kind condolences on the death of my wife. Though for her sake I have welcomed her death as bringing freedom from living agony, I feel the loss more than I had thought I should. We were a couple outside the ordinary. It

was in 1906 that, by mutual consent and after unconscious trials, we definitely adopted self-restraint as a rule of life. To my great joy, this knit us together as never before. We ceased to be two different entities. Without my wishing it, she chose to lose herself in me. The result was that she became truly my better half. She was a woman always of very strong will which, in our early days, I used to mistake for obstinacy. But that strong will enabled her to become, quite unwittingly, my teacher in the art and practice of non-violent non-co-operation. The practice began with my own family. When I introduced it in 1906 in the political field, it came to be known by the more comprehensive and specially coined name of satyagraha. When the course of Indian imprisonments commenced in South Africa, Kasturba was among civil resisters. She went through greater physical trials than I. Although she had gone through several imprisonments, she did not take kindly to the present incarceration during which all creature comforts were at her disposal. My arrest simultaneously with that of many others, and her own immediately following, gave her a shock and embittered her. She was wholly unprepared for my arrest. I had assured her that the Government trusted my non-violence, and they would not arrest me unless I courted arrest myself. Indeed, the nervous shock was so great that after her arrest she developed violent diarrhoea and, but for the attention that Dr. Sushila Nayyar, who was arrested at the same time as the deceased, was able to give her, she might have died before joining me in this detention camp, where my presence soothed her and the diarrhoea stopped without any further medicament. Not so the bitterness. It led to fretfulness ending in painfully slow dissolution of the body.

"In the light of the foregoing, you will perhaps understand the pain I felt when I read in the newspapers the statement made on behalf of the Government which, I hold, was an unfortunate departure from truth regarding her who was precious to me beyond measure . . . Truth is said to be the first and the heaviest casualty in war. How I wish in this war it could be otherwise in the case of the allied powers!

"I now come to your address which you delivered before the legislature and of which you have kindly sent me a copy. When the newspapers containing the address were received, I was by the bedside of the deceased. Shri Mirabai read to me the Associated Press

report. But my mind was elsewhere. Therefore, the receipt of your speech in a handy form was most welcome. I have now read it with all the attention it deserves. Having gone through it, I feel drawn to offer a few remarks, all the more so as you have observed that the views expressed by you 'need not be regarded as final'. May this letter lead to a reshaping of some of them!

"In the middle of page two, you speak of the welfare of 'Indian peoples'. I have seen in some Viceregal pronouncements the inhabitants of India being referred to as the people of India. Are the two expressions synonymous?

"At page thirteen, referring to the attainment of self-government by India, you write, 'I am absolutely convinced not only that the above represents the genuine desire of the British people, but that they wish to see an early realization of it. It is qualified only at present by an absolute determination to let nothing stand in the way of the earliest possible defeat of Germany and Japan; and by a resolve to see that in the solution of the constitutional problem full account is taken of the interests of those who have loyally supported us in this war and at all other times—soldiers who have served the common cause; the people who have worked with us; the rulers and populations of the states to whom we are pledged; minorities who have trusted us to see that they get a fair deal . . . but until the two main Indian parties at least can come to terms, I do not see any immediate hope of progress.' Without reasoning it out, I venture to give my paraphrase of your pronouncement: 'We the British shall stand by the Indian soldiers whom we have brought into being and have trained for consolidating our rule and position in India, and who, by experience, we have found can effectively help us in our wars against other nations. We shall also stand by the rulers of the Indian states, many of whom are our creation and all of whom owe their present position to us, even when these rulers curb or actually crush the spirit of the people whom they rule. Similarly, shall we stand by the minorities whom too we have encouraged and used against the vast majority when the latter have at all attempted to resist our rule. It makes no difference that they (the majority) seek to replace it by a rule of the will of the people of India taken as a whole. And in no case, will we transfer power unless the Hindus and Muslims come to us with an agreement among themselves.' The position taken up in the

paragraph quoted and interpreted by me is no new thing. I regard the situation thus envisaged as hopeless, and I claim in this to represent the thought of the man in the street. Out of the contemplation of this hopelessness was born the anguished cry of 'Quit India'. What I see happening in this country, day after day, provides a complete vindication of the 'Quit India' formula as defined by me in my considered writings.

"I note as I read your speech that you do not regard the sponsors of the formula of 'Quit India' as outcastes to be shunned by society. You believe them to be high-minded persons. Then, treat them as such and trust their interpretation of their own formula and you cannot go wrong.

"After developing the Cripps offer you have said at page sixteen in the middle of the paragraph, '. . . the demand for the release of these leaders who are in detention is an utterly barren one, until there is some sign on their part of willingness to co-operate. It needs no consultation with any one or anything but his own conscience for any one of those under detention to decide whether he will withdraw from "Quit India" resolution and the policy which had very tragic consequences, and will co-operate in the great tasks ahead.' Then again, reverting to the same subject you say on pages nineteen and twenty, 'There is an important element which stands aloof; I recognize how much ability and high-mindedness it contains; but I deplore its present policy and methods as barren and unpractical. I should like to have the co-operation of this element in solving the present and future problems of India. If its leaders feel that they cannot consent to take part in the present Government of India, they may still be able to assist in considering the future problems. But I see no reason to release those responsible for the declaration of August 8, 1942, until I am convinced that the policy of non-co-operation and even of obstruction has been withdrawn—not in sackcloth and ashes, that helps no one—but in recognition of a mistaken and unprofitable policy.'

"I am surprised that you, an eminent soldier and man of affairs, should hold such an opinion. How can the withdrawal of a resolution, arrived at jointly by hundreds of men and women after much debating and careful consideration, be a matter of individual conscience? A resolution jointly undertaken can be honourably, conscientiously and properly withdrawn only after joint discussion

and deliberation. Individual conscience may come into play after this necessary step, not before. Is a prisoner ever free to exercise his conscience? Is it just and proper to expect him to do so?

"Again, you recognize 'much ability and high-mindedness' in those who represent the Congress organization and then deplore their present policy and method as 'barren and unpractical'. Does not the second statement cancel the first? Able and high-minded men may come to erroneous decisions, but I have not before heard such people's policy and methods being described as 'barren and unpractical'. Is it not up to you to discuss the pros and cons of their policy with them before pronouncing judgement especially when they are also admittedly representatives of millions of their people? Does it become an all-powerful Government to be afraid of the consequences of releasing unarmed men and women with a backing only of men and women equally unarmed and even pledged to non-violence? Moreover, why should you hesitate to put me in touch with the Working Committee members, so as to enable me to know their minds and reactions?

"Then you have talked of the 'tragic consequences' of the 'Quit India' resolution. I have said enough in my reply to the Government pamphlet *Congress Responsibility*. Combating the charge that the Congress was responsible for those consequences. I commend the pamphlet and my reply to your attention, if you have not already seen them. Here I would just like to emphasize what I have said already. Had the Government stayed action till they had studied my speeches and those of the members of the Working Committee history would have been written differently.

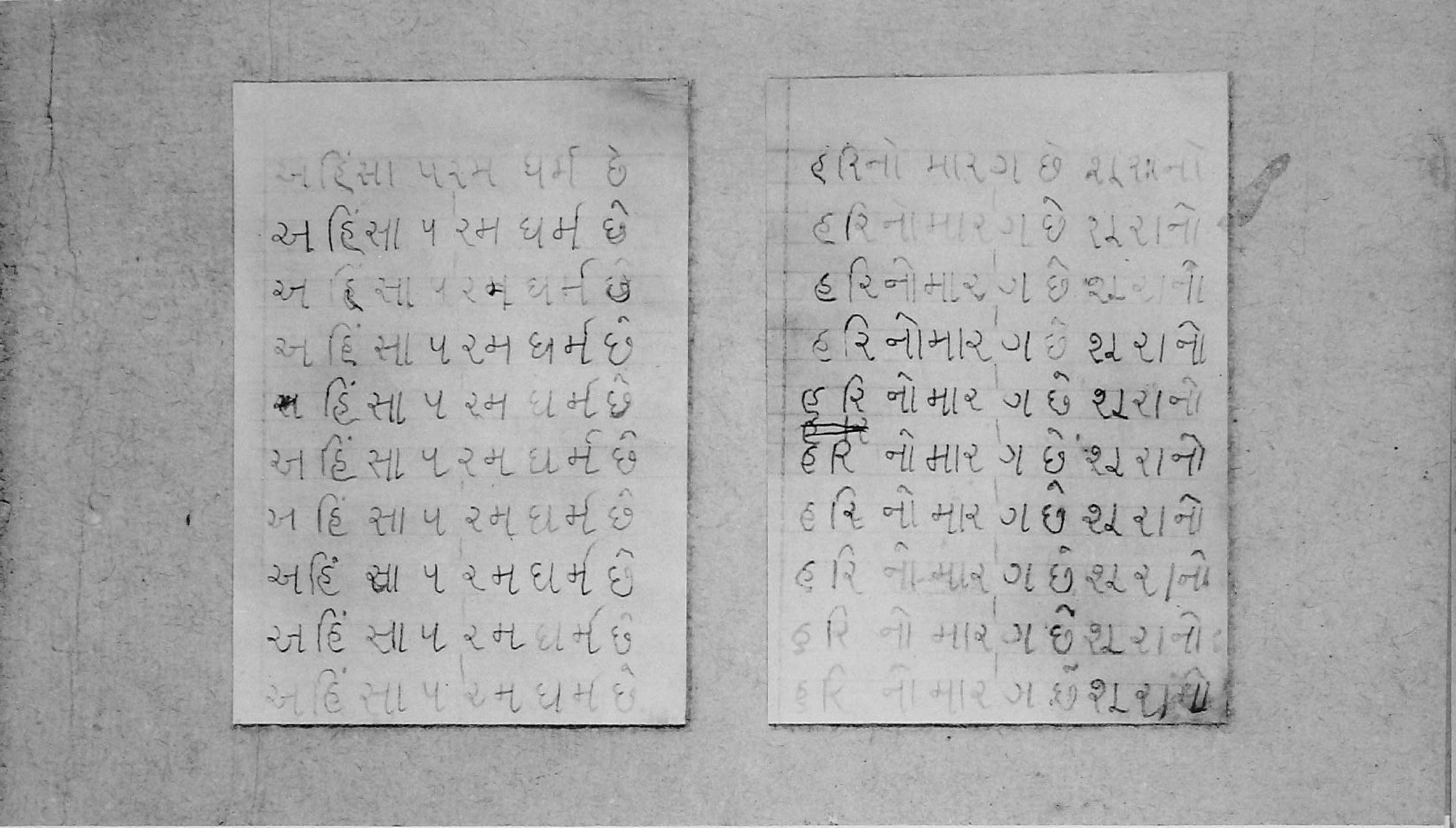
"You have made much of the fact that your Executive Council is predominantly Indian. But surely, their being Indians no more makes them representatives of India than non-Indians. Conversely it is quite conceivable that a non-Indian may be a true representative of India, if he is elected by the vote of the Indian people. It would give no satisfaction even if the head of the Indian Government was a distinguished Indian not chosen by the free vote of the Indian people.

"Even you, I am sorry, have fallen into the common error of describing Indian forces as having been recruited by 'voluntary enlistment.' A person who takes to soldiering as a profession will enlist himself wherever he gets his market wage. Voluntary enlistment

has come to bear by association a meaning much higher than that which attaches to an enlistment like that of Indian soldiers. Were those who carried out the orders at the Jallianwala Bagh massacre volunteers? The very Indian soldiers who have been taken out of India and are showing unexampled bravery will be ready to point their rifles unerringly at their own countrymen at the orders of the British Government, their employers. Will they deserve the honourable name of volunteers?

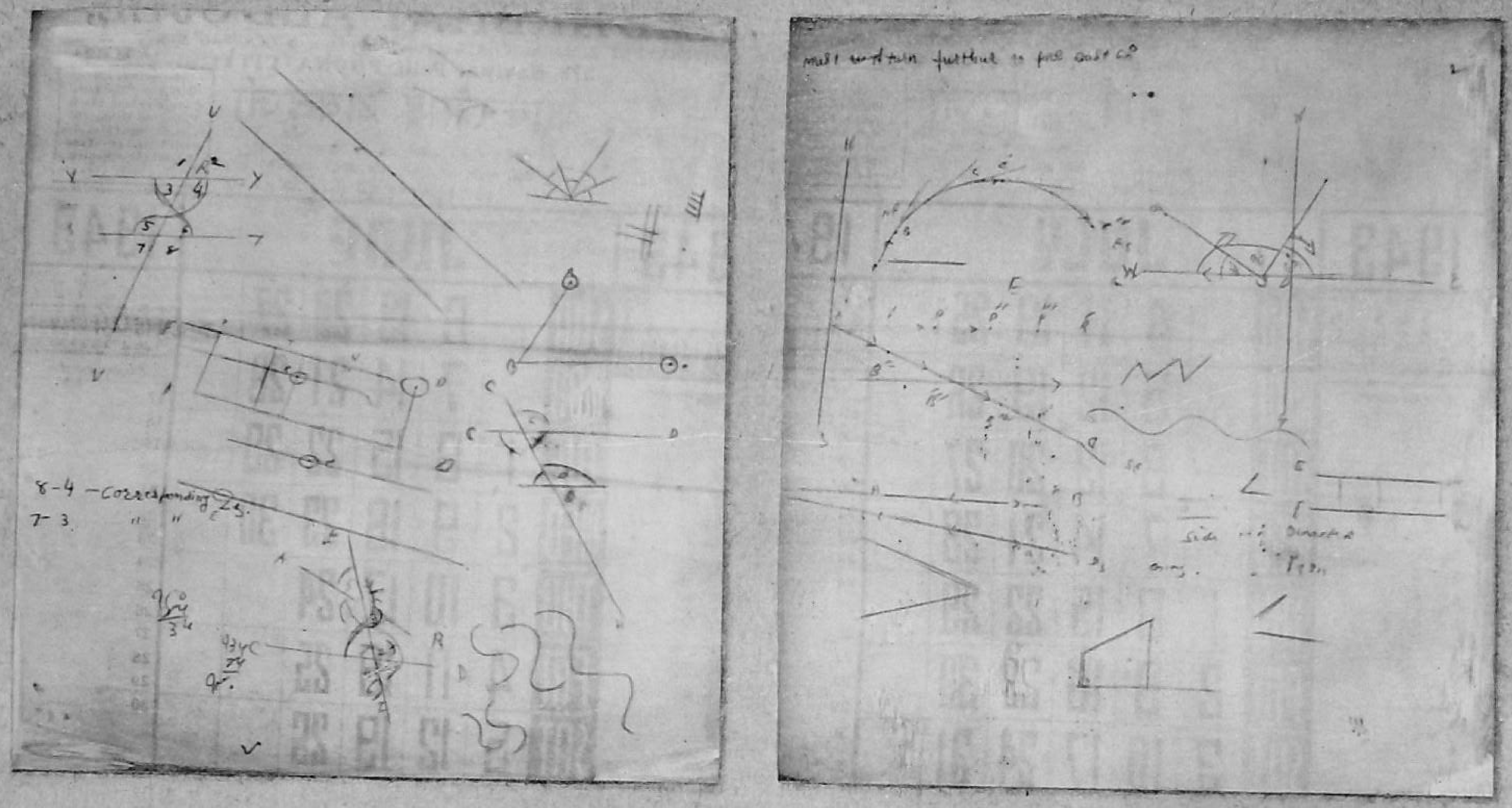
"You are now flying all over India. You have not hesitated to go among the skeletons of Bengal. May I suggest an interruption in your scheduled flights and a descent upon Ahmednagar and Aga Khan Palace in order to probe the hearts of your captives? We are all friends of the British, however much we may criticize the British Government and system in India. If you can but trust, you will find us to be the greatest helpers in the fight against Nazism, fascism, Japanism and the like.

"Now I revert to your letter of the 25th February. Shri Mirabai and I have received replies to our representations. The remaining inmates have received their notices. The reply received by me, I regard as a mockery, the one received by Shri Mirabai as an insult. According to the report of the Home Member's answer to a question in the Central Assembly, the replies received by us seem to be no replies. He is reported to have said that the stage 'for the review of the cases had not yet arrived. Government at present were only receiving representations from prisoners.' If their representations in reply to the Government notices are to be considered merely by the executive that imprisoned them without trial, it will amount to a farce and an eyewash, meant perhaps for foreign consumption, but not as any indication of a desire to do justice. My views are known to the Government. I may be considered an impossible man, though altogether wrongly I would protest. But what about Mirabai? As you know, she is the daughter of an admiral and former commander-in-chief of these waters. But she left the life of ease and chose instead to throw in her lot with me. Her parents, recognizing her urge to come to me, gave her their full blessings. She went to Orissa at my request to understand the plight of the people of that benighted land. That Government was hourly expecting the Japanese invasion. Papers were to be removed or burnt, and withdrawal of the civil authority from the coast was being contemplated.



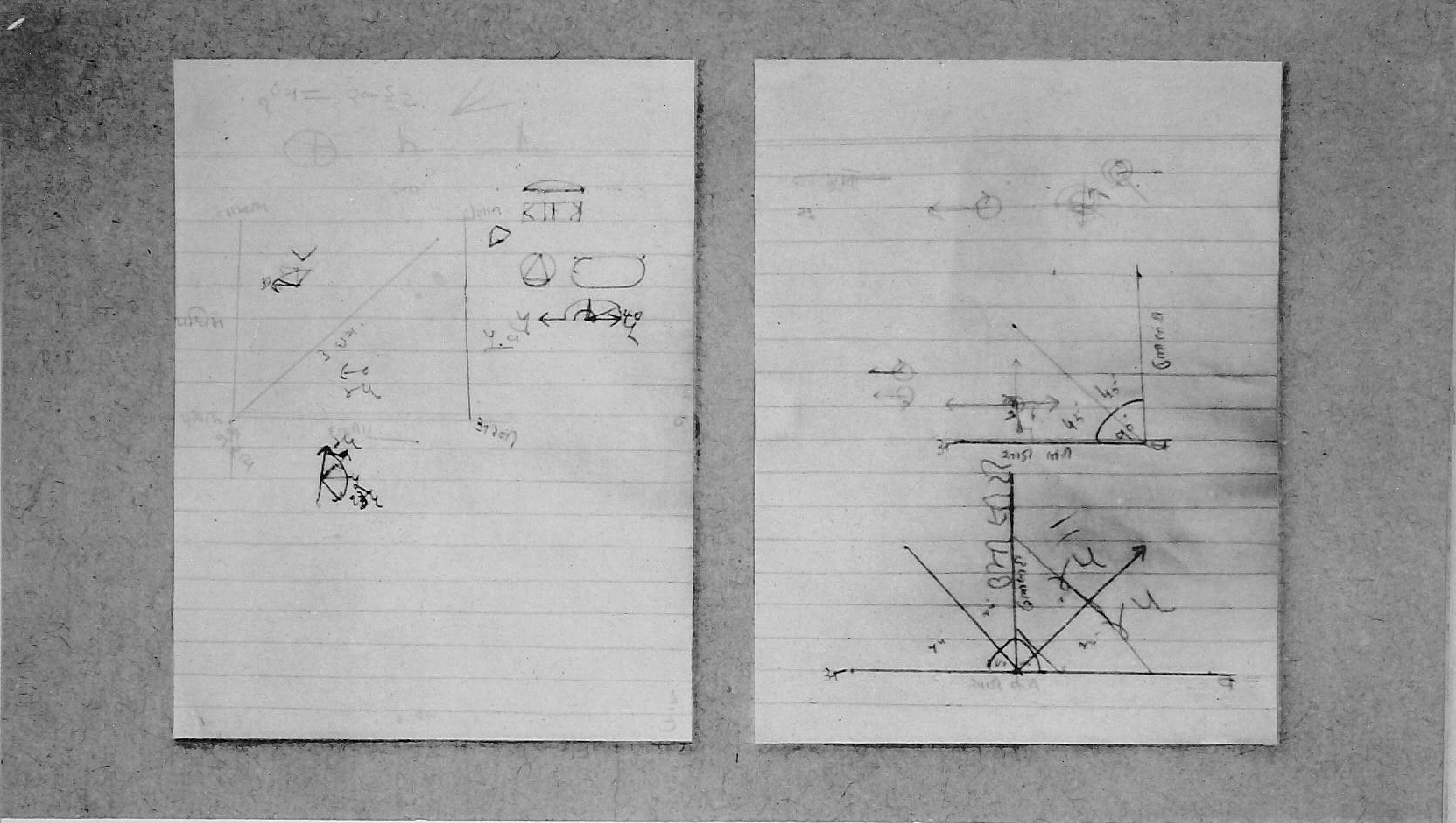
Courtesy : Manubehn Gandhi

A copybook in Gujarati prepared by Gandhi for Kasturbai during the detention in Aga Khan Palace : the first line written by Gandhi and the rest copied by Kasturbai



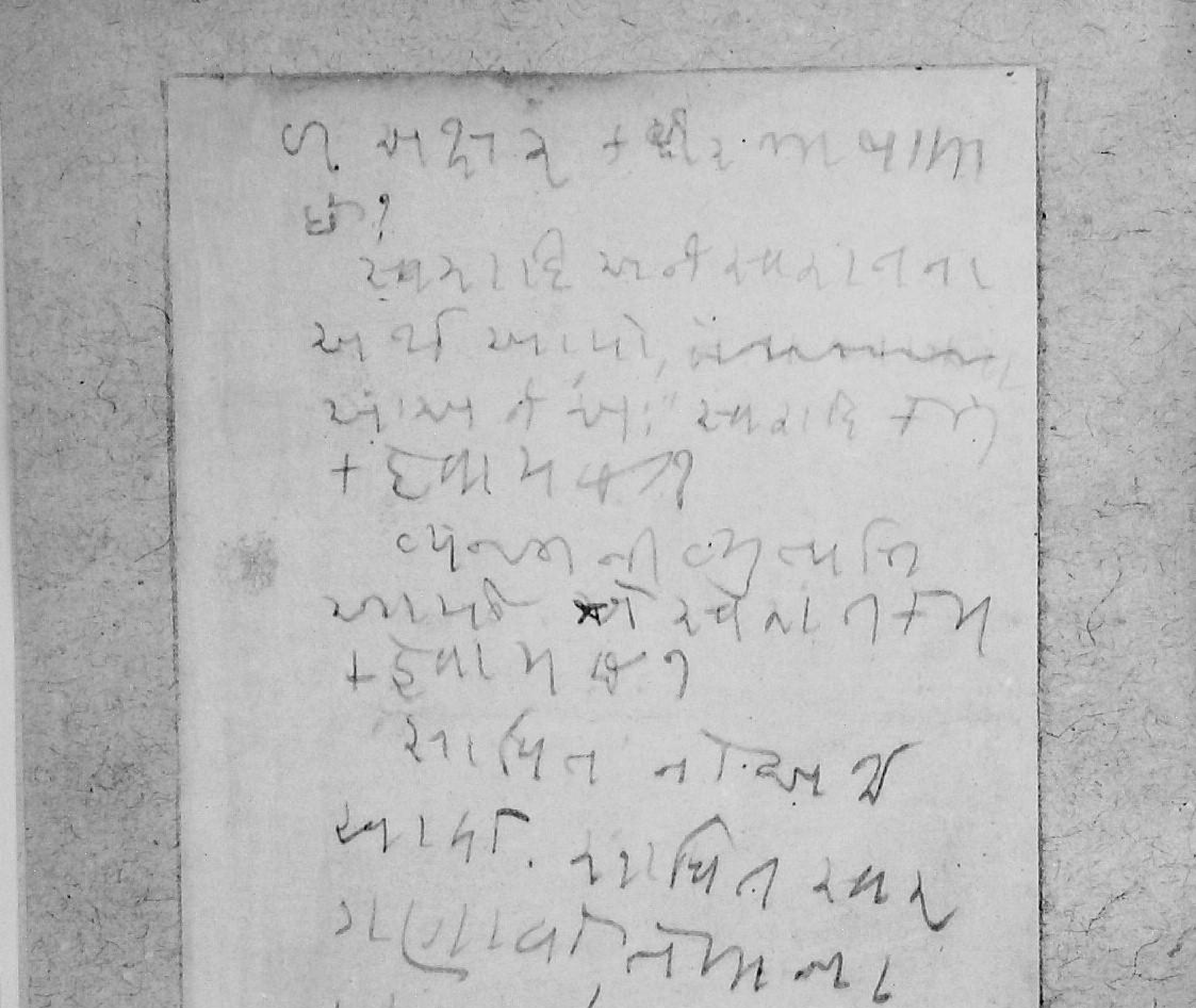
Courtesy : Manubehn Gandhi

Gandhi's lessons in geometry written on the back of old calendar sheets for Manu Gandhi during the detention in 1944



Courtesy : Manubehn Gandhi

Geometrical diagrams prepared by Gandhi for Manu Gandhi during the detention, 1944



Courtesy : Manubehn Gandhi

Question paper in Gujarati grammar set by Gandhi for Manu Gandhi during the detention, 1944

Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Kasturbai's last moments in Aga Khan Palace during the detention, February 22, 1944

Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Death of Kasturbai, February 22, 1944

Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Vigil

Photograph : Udit Gopal

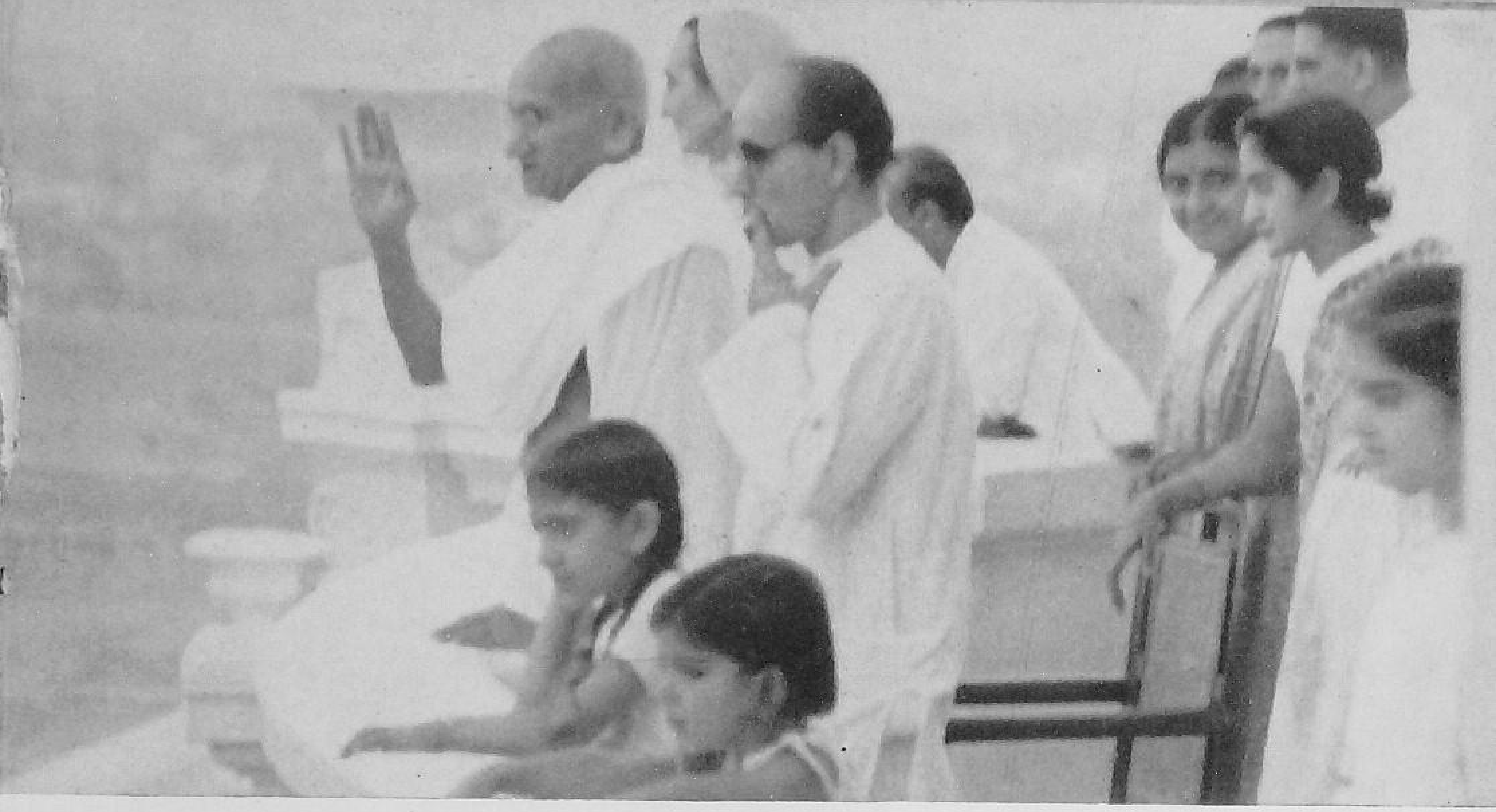
Samadhis of Mahadev Desai and Kasturbai, Aga Khan Palace, 1944

Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi offering prayers at the samadhis of Mahadev and Kasturbai after his release, May 6, 1944

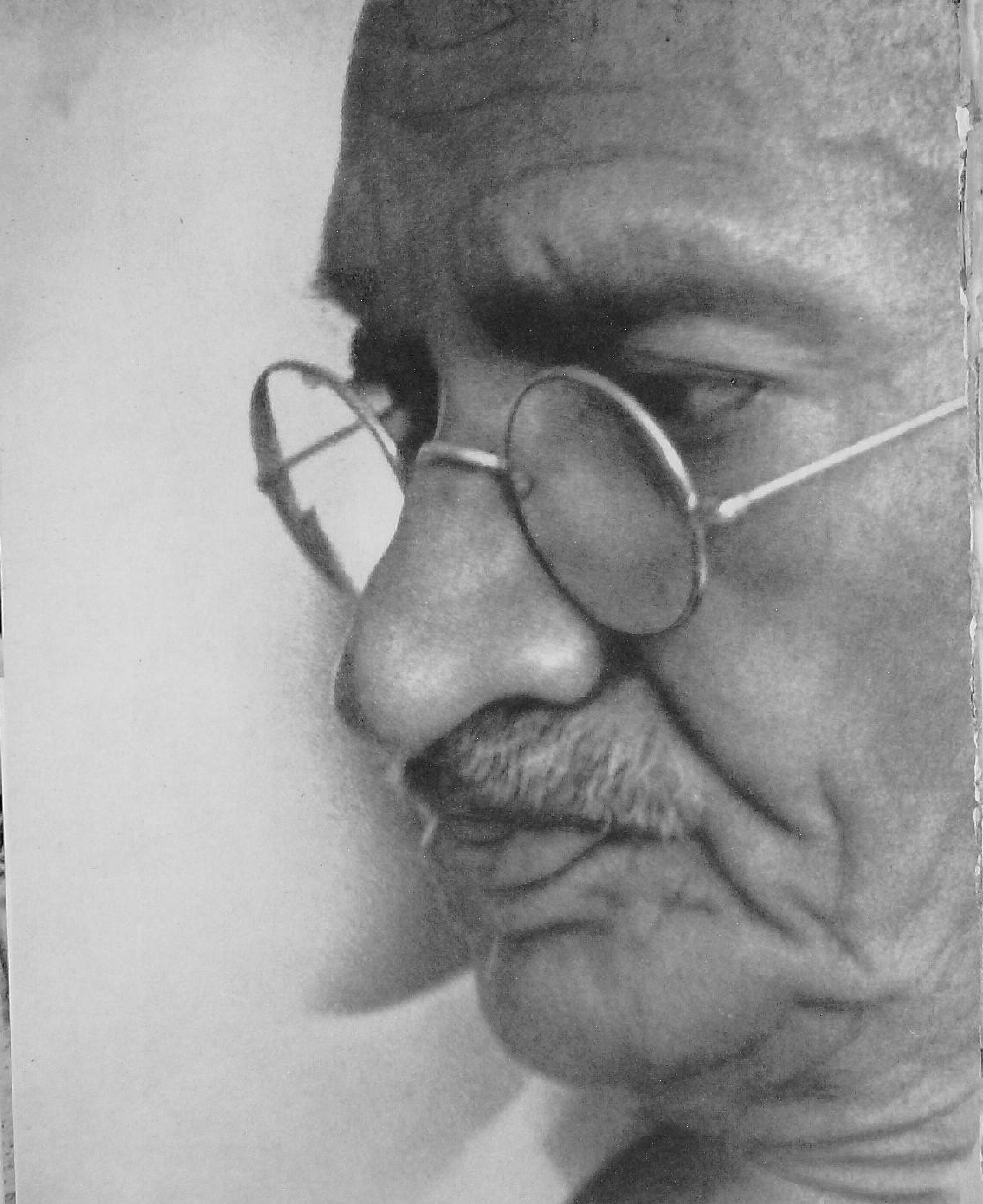
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi at Parnakuti, Poona, May 1944



Photographs: D. R. D. Wadia

Gandhi at prayer meeting, Parnakuti, May 1944



Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

Gandhi, May 1944

Mirabai made Chaudwar (Cuttack) airfield her headquarters, and the local military commander was glad of the help she could give him. Later she went to New Delhi and saw General Sir Hartley and General Molesworth, who both appreciated her work and greeted her as one of their own class and caste. It, therefore, baffles me to understand her incarceration. The only reason for burying her alive, so far as I can see, is that she had committed the crime of associating herself with me. I suggest your immediately releasing her, or your seeing her and then deciding. I may add that she is not yet free from the pain for the alleviation of which the Government sent Captain Simcox at my request. It would be a tragedy, if she became permanently disabled in detention. I have mentioned Shri Mirabai's case because it is typically unjust.

"I apologize to you for a letter which has gone beyond length I had prescribed for myself. It has also become very personal and unconventional. That, however, is the way my loyalty to friends works. I have written without reservation. Your letter and your speech have given me the opening. For the sake of India, England and humanity, I hope you will treat this as an honest and friendly, if candid, response to your speech.

"Years ago, while teaching the boys and girls of Tolstoy Farm in South Africa, I happened to read to them Wordsworth's 'Character of the Happy Warrior'. It recurs to me as I am writing to you. It will delight my heart to realize that warrior in you. There will be little difference between the manners and the methods of the Axis powers and the allies, if the war is to resolve itself into a mere trial of brute strength."

On March 28, Lord Wavell wrote:

"You will receive a separate reply from the Home Secretary on your complaint about Mr. Butler's answer to a question in the House of Commons. I can only say that I deeply regret if you are left with the impression that the Government of India have been unsympathetic in the matter of Mrs. Gandhi's illness. Miss Slade's case will be examined in the light of what you say about her.

"I do not think it profitable that we should enter into lengthy argument, and do not propose to answer in detail the points you raise in your letter. But I think it best to give you a clear statement of my views on the future development of India and the reasons for your present detention.

"The draft declaration of H.M.G. which Sir Stafford Cripps brought to India stated in unmistakable terms the intention of H.M.G. to give India self-government under a constitution of her own devising, arrived at by agreement between the principal elements. I need hardly say that I am in entire accord with that aim, and only seek the best means to implement it without delivering India to confusion and turmoil. Much wisdom and spirit of goodwill and compromise will be required to arrive at the right solution, but with good leadership I am sure a solution can be found.

"Meanwhile, there is much work to be done, particularly in the economic field, in preparing India to take her proper place in the modern world. She must be ready to welcome change and progress in many hitherto unfamiliar directions and to raise the standard of living of her population. Such work is primarily non-political: it may well hasten a political settlement, but cannot await it. It will give rise to many new and absorbing problems demanding the best abilities that India can bring to bear on them. India cannot be expected to tackle all these problems in isolation from the rest of the world, or without the aid that Britain can give and the services of an experienced administration. But it is work in which leaders of all parties can co-operate with the certainty that they are helping the country towards the goal of freedom.

"I regret that I must view the present policy of the Congress party as hindering and not forwarding the Indian progress to self-government and development. During a war in which the success of the United Nations against the Axis powers is vital both to India and to the world, as you yourself have recognized, the Working Committee of the Congress declined to co-operate, ordered Congress ministries to resign, and decided to take no part in the administration of the country or in the war effort which India was making to assist the United Nations. At the greatest crisis of all for India, at a time when Japanese invasion was possible, the Congress party decided to pass a resolution calling on the British to leave India, which could not fail to have the most serious effect on our ability to defend the frontiers of India against the Japanese. I am quite clear that India's problems cannot be solved by an immediate and complete withdrawal of the British.

"I do not accuse you or the Congress of any wish deliberately to aid the Japanese. But you are too intelligent a man, Mr. Gandhi,

not to have realized that the effect of your resolution must be to hamper the prosecution of war; and it is clear to me that you had lost confidence in our ability to defend India, and were prepared to take advantage of our supposed military straits to gain political advantage. I do not see how those responsible for safety of India could have acted otherwise than they did and could have failed to arrest those who sponsored the resolution. As to general Congress responsibility for the disturbances which followed, I was, as you know, commander-in-chief at the time; my vital lines of communication to the Burma frontier were cut by the Congress supporters, in the name of the Congress, often using the Congress flag. I cannot, therefore, hold Congress guiltless of what occurred; I cannot believe that you, with your acumen and experience, can have been unaware of what was likely to follow from your policy. I do not believe that the Congress action in this matter represented the real feeling of India, nor that the Congress attitude of non-co-operation represents the opinion of anything like a majority of India.

"To sum up, I believe that with general co-operation we can in the immediate future do much to solve India's economic problems and can make steady and substantial progress towards Indian self-government.

"I believe that the greatest contribution that the Congress party can make towards India's welfare is to abandon the policy of non-co-operation and to join whole-heartedly with other Indian parties and with the British in helping India forward in the economic and political progress—not by any dramatic or any spectacular stroke, but by hard steady work towards the end ahead. I think that the greatest service you could do to India would be to advise unequivocally such co-operation.

"In the meantime I regard it as my task in the interest of India, of which I am a sincere friend, to concentrate all my efforts on bringing this war to a victorious conclusion, and to prepare for India's advancement after the war. In this task I feel I can count on very considerable co-operation from the majority of Indians."

On April 9, Gandhi addressed a letter to the Viceroy:

"You have sent me a frank reply. I propose to reciprocate your courtesy by being perfectly frank. Friendship to be true demands frankness even though it may some time appear unpleasant. If anything I say offends you, please accept my apology in advance.

"It is a pity that you have refused to deal with important points raised in my letter.

"Your letter is a plea for co-operation by the Congress in the present administration and failing that in planning for the future. In my opinion, this requires equality between the parties and mutual trust. But equality is absent and the Government distrust of the Congress can be seen at every turn. The result is that suspicion of the Government is universal. Add to this the fact that Congressmen have no faith in the competence of the Government to ensure India's future good. This want of faith is based upon bitter experience of the past and present conduct of the British administration of India. Is it not high time that you co-operated with the people of India, through their elected representatives instead of expecting co-operation from them?

"All this was implied in the August Resolution. The sanction behind the demand in the resolution was not violence but self-suffering. Anyone, be he Congressman or other, who acted against this rule of conduct had no authority to use the Congress name for his own action. But I see that this resolution repels you as it did Lord Linlithgow. You know that I have joined issue on the point. I have seen nothing since to alter my view. You have been good enough to credit me with 'intelligence', 'experience' and 'acumen'. Let me say that all these three gifts have failed to make me realize that the effect of the Congress resolution 'must be to hamper the prosecution of the war'. The responsibility for what followed the hasty arrests of Congressmen must rest solely on the Government. For, they invited the crisis, not the authors of the resolution.

"You remind me that you were the commander-in-chief at the time. How much better it would have been for all concerned, if confidence in the immeasurable strength of arms had ruled your action instead of fear of a rebellion! Had the Government stayed their hand at the time, surely, all the bloodshed of those months would have been avoided. And it is highly likely that the Japanese menace would have become a thing of the past. Unfortunately it was not to be. And so the menace is still with us, and what is more, the Government are pursuing a policy of suppression of liberty and truth. I have studied the latest ordinance about detenus, and I recall the Rowlatt Act of 1919. It was popularly called the Black Act. As you know it gave rise to an unprecedented agitation. That

act pales into insignificance before the series of ordinances that are being showered from the Viceregal throne. The martial law in effect governs not one province, as in 1919, but the whole of India. Things are moving from bad to worse.

"You say, 'It is clear to me that you had lost confidence in our ability to defend India and were prepared to take advantage of our supposed military straits to gain political advantage.' I must deny both the charges. I venture to suggest that you should follow the golden rule, and withdraw your statement and suspend judgement till you have submitted the evidence in your possession to an impartial tribunal and obtained its verdict. I confess that I do not make the request with much confidence. For, in dealing with Congressmen and others, Government have combined the prosecutor, judge and jailor in the same person and thus made proper defence impossible on the part of the accused. Judgements of courts are being rendered nugatory by fresh ordinances. No man's freedom can be said to be safe in this extraordinary situation. You will probably retort that it is an exigency of the war. I wonder!

"As I visualize India today, it is one vast prison containing four hundred million souls. You are its sole custodian. The Government prisons are prisons within this prison. I agree with you that whilst you hold the views expressed in your letter under reply, the proper place for one like me is a Government prison. And unless there is a change of heart, view and policy on the part of the Government, I am quite content to remain your prisoner. Only, I hope, you will listen to the request made by me to remove me and my fellow prisoners to some other prison where the cost of our detention need not be even one tenth of what it is today."

Release

1944

There was no expectation that Gandhi would be released before the end of the protracted war. For a time, there was also anguish that he might die during the long period of detention. Aga Khan Palace was highly malarious. On April 16, 1944, a communique stated: "Mr. Gandhi has been suffering for the last three days from malaria. He is feeling weak, but his general condition is as satisfactory as can be expected." Ten days later, Mr. Amery stated in the Parliament that he had no further information.

The communiques continued to say that Gandhi's condition was improving. "He is in good spirits. He has been advised to take more nourishment and tonics." On April 30 it was announced that "no further bulletin will be issued unless necessary". Three days later the communique said: "There has been worsening of Mr. Gandhi's anæmic condition and his blood-pressure has fallen further. His general condition is again giving rise to some anxiety."

For some time past, there prevailed thick rumours about his imminent removal from Aga Khan Palace. The Inspector-General of Prisons, when he visited Gandhi on the morning of May 5, was rather mysterious. He casually asked if in the opinion of doctors Gandhi was fit to undertake a hundred miles' journey by train or car. He gave no further information. Gandhi had repeatedly requested the Government to remove him from the palace. The idea that he was responsible for the heavy expenditure on his detention hurt him deeply. The question of release did not bother him.

At about six in the evening of May 5 the I.G.P. followed by the superintendent of the camp walked into Gandhi's room and told Gandhi that he and the whole party were to be released unconditionally the next morning. "Are you joking?" Gandhi asked. "No, I am serious," said the I.G.P. "You can continue to stay here for some time for convenience, if you like. The guard will be removed

at eight in the morning tomorrow and then your friends can visit you freely. Or you can go to your friend's place in Poona or to Bombay. Personally, I would not advise you to stay here. This is a military area and when crowds begin coming for *darshan*, there might be a clash which you won't like." Gandhi smiled and asked in good humour: "What about my railway fare if I stay in Poona for some time?" "You will have it whenever you leave Poona," he replied. Gandhi bade him good night saying, "All right, then I will stay in Poona for two or three days."

On May 6, at five in the morning, the prayers were offered in the palace. After that, Gandhi drafted a letter to the Government requesting them to acquire for him the plot where Kasturbai and Mahadev had been cremated: "The place of cremation which has been fenced off becomes consecrated ground. The party has daily visited the ground twice and offered floral tributes to the departed spirits and said prayers. I trust that the plot will be acquired by the Government with the right of way to it through H. H. the Aga Khan's grounds, so as to enable those relatives and friends, who wish to visit the cremation ground whenever they like. Subject to the permission of the Government, I would like to arrange for the upkeep of the sacred spot and daily prayers. I hope that necessary steps will be taken by the Government in terms of my prayer."

Gandhi accompanied by the inmates paid his last visit to the *samadhi* as a prisoner. After offering floral offerings and the usual prayers, they returned to the palace. At 7.45, the I.G.P. came. Gandhi picked up his stick ready to walk out. "No, Mahatmaji, wait a few minutes," he said. At the stroke of eight, the I.G.P. led the party away. He took Gandhi in his own car, the rest of the party followed in another one, and they passed out of the barbed wire after spending one year, nine months and fifteen days in that place of detention. Gandhi's release, according to the Government communique, was unconditional but "this decision has been taken solely on medical grounds."

As the car drove up to Parnakuti, Gandhi became very pensive. He was thinking of Kasturbai who had been so keen to get out of jail. "Yet I know she could not have had a better death," he murmured. "Both Ba and Mahadev laid down their lives at the altar of the goddess of freedom. And they have become immortal. Would they have attained that glory, if they had died outside prison?"

Gandhi had become very weak and there was physical and mental exhaustion, though he kept cheerful. He rested at Poona for three days. Only once, every evening, he appeared before the public to participate in the prayers. On May 9, he visited Aga Khan Palace to pay homage to the memory of Mahadev and Kasturbai.

On May 11, Gandhi arrived in Bombay to sojourn at Juhu. On May 14 he entered on a fortnight's silence to ensure uninterrupted rest. It was discovered by now that he had contracted hookworm infection. The sea breeze brought him some relief and within a week he took a long drive and spent ninety minutes inspecting the areas devastated by the terrific explosion in the Bombay docks.

Except for the evening prayers and walks along the seashore, he confined himself to his cottage. Musicians came daily to entertain him with devotional songs. One evening, he saw a sound film for the first time. "Mission to Moscow" was specially screened for him at "Gandhi Gram", his abode.

He avoided serious discussions. On May 20, he wrote to Jayakar: "The country expects much from me. I am not at all happy. I feel even ashamed. I should not have fallen ill. I tried not to, but failed at length. I feel that they will imprison me as soon as I am declared free from the present weakness. And if they do not arrest me, what can I do? I cannot withdraw the August Resolution. As you have very properly said, it is innocuous. You may differ about the sanction. It is the breath of life for me."

On May 29, Gandhi broke his total "medical silence" and decided temporarily upon silence for twenty hours a day, speaking only between four and eight in the evening. Strict discipline and meticulous care of health enabled him to proceed to Poona on June 15.

On June 17, Gandhi addressed the following letter to the Viceroy from Nature Cure Clinic, Poona:

"But for the fact that this letter is along the lines of your preoccupation I should not have troubled you with a letter from me.

"Though there is little cause for it, the whole country and even many from outside expect me to make decisive contribution to the general good. I am sorry to say my convalescence threatens to be fairly long. Even if I was quite well, I could do little or nothing unless I know the mind of the Working Committee of the Congress. I pleaded as a prisoner for permission to see them. I plead now as a free man for such permission. If you will see me before deciding,

I shall gladly go wherever you want me to, as soon as I am allowed by medical advisers to undertake long distance travelling.

"I have circulated among friends, for private use, copies of the correspondence that passed between the authorities and me during detention. I do feel, however, that, in fairness to me, Government should permit its publication in the press."

On June 20 a press note from Delhi announced Government's intention to issue a pamphlet containing the letters between Gandhi and the Government exchanged during his detention. The next day *Correspondence with Mr. Gandhi* was published. The Viceroy refused permission to Gandhi to see the Working Committee. He referred to Gandhi's adherence to the "Quit India" resolution and stated: "I feel that a meeting between us at present could have no value and could only raise hopes which would be disappointed. If after your convalescence and on further reflection, you have a definite and constructive policy to propose for the furtherance of India's welfare, I shall be glad to consider."

On June 29, about fifty representative Congressmen of Maharashtra had a meeting with Gandhi in Poona. He addressed them in Hindustani:

"I am glad that I am able to meet so many representatives of the Congress in Maharashtra. I would like to make it clear that I do not meet you as a representative, in terms of the August Resolution, to conduct the civil disobedience campaign adumbrated in that resolution. In the language of satyagraha, I ceased to occupy that status, as soon as I was jailed. And if I am now out of it, it is not because of mine or your strength but as a result of illness. Illness in a satyagrahi is a thing to be ashamed of. This accidental release does not restore to me the authority that lapsed with my imprisonment. I discussed my position with some lawyer friends in terms of the law prevalent in this land, and they are of the opinion that what I hold to be true in the language of satyagraha happens to be true legally too. Probably we will be able to see their legal opinion published in a few days. Any way, I am here holding no better status in the eye of the Congress than any single one of you. Indeed, speaking legally I have no status in the Congress organization, for I resigned some years ago even my four-anna membership. Nevertheless, I know, I occupy a big place in your hearts and you give weight to whatever I might have to say. What I may say is to

be regarded merely as individual opinion to be accepted or rejected by you at will. It would have been otherwise, if I were speaking in a representative character. Then I would have expected you as disciplined soldiers to carry out my instructions.

"At my request, the secretary kindly sent me a report of the happenings in Maharashtra since the 9th August 1942. He has also kindly sent me a list of the names of those who have assembled here and some questions. I have read all these papers carefully. I do not propose to reply to the questions in detail. I had hoped to be able to be with you much longer than the period I have been allowed by my medical advisers. I have, therefore, to say what I have to say inside of thirty minutes. You will, therefore, excuse me for confining my remarks only to the present. I can say at once that as a man wedded to truth and non-violence, not merely as a matter of discipline or expedience, but as a rule of conduct in all walks of life, I can endorse nothing untruthful or violent. But I refuse to sit in judgement upon the actions of others. Nor is it of any avail at this moment and in this meeting to weigh individual or collective acts of Congressmen and others in the scales of non-violence and truth. Suffice it to say that experience has led me to the unshakable conviction that our success has been mathematically proportionate to the extent to which we have adhered to truth and non-violence. The phenomenal awakening of the masses during the last twenty-five years has been entirely due to the purity of our means. And to the extent that untruth and violence have crept in, they have hindered our progress.

"Your faith in me overwhelms me. My accidental release has given rise to great expectations. I am doubtful whether I deserve all this confidence. But this much I know that whatever strength I may have, is entirely due to the fact that I am a votary of truth and non-violence. Some friends have told me that truth and non-violence have no place in politics and worldly affairs. But I do not agree. I have no use for them as a means of individual salvation. Their introduction and application in everyday life has been my experiment all along.

"What each one of us should do at the present moment is of the utmost importance. As I have said, even if I thought that there was an opportunity for offering civil resistance at the present moment, I can't act in the name of the Congress. But remember the

concluding golden lines of the August Resolution. On the arrest of the principal Congressmen on the 9th day of August 1942, every Congressman became his own leader competent to act as he liked provided that his action fell within the limits prescribed by truth and non-violence. As I have said in my previous writings, every one who follows the Congress policy is a Congressman, whether he is on the Congress register or not. The Congress should be a poor organization if it depended for its strength on a few lakhs members whose names appeared on the Congress rolls. The great strength of the Congress is derived from the fact that it is broad-based upon the goodwill and co-operation, at critical moments, of dumb millions. I, therefore, fail to see what cause there can be for frustration. Is it merely because we did not reach our goal within the period hoped for? It is given to man to make the effort even in the face of the heaviest odds. Success depends upon God's will or, if you like, upon many circumstances outside our control. There would be cause for frustration, if we lost faith in ourselves, our means or our cause. There is no such thing as frustration in the dictionary of satyagraha. I have no answer for those who never had faith or have lost faith in the efficacy of their own weapon. The communal tangle is no doubt there. But that is like a quarrel between brothers. We must admit that forces of evil hem us in from all sides. They were never so strongly entrenched as they appear to be at present. But that is no warrant for pessimism or for despair. We have got the golden method of non-violent non-co-operation with evil. If we do not appear to have succeeded, the cause lies in ourselves. If the several component parts of the nation do not believe in the virtue of non-co-operation, the responsibility of those who believe in it becomes all the heavier. We may have to strive long, the burden to carry may be heavy. But I can say from experience that it is never too heavy. What burden can be too heavy for a man or a woman who has risked all for the cause? I may tell you that at no moment have I suffered from any sense of frustration. Frustration is born of our own weaknesses and loss of faith. So long as we do not lose faith in ourselves, it is well with India. This is the message that I want to leave with you this evening.

" 'What about the communal tangle, the political deadlock, and the food situation and the like,' you will ask. I have an answer for all these. But I may not attempt it at this meeting.

"I am convinced that the sufferings of the people cannot be alleviated, until India has real political power. I cannot alleviate the food situation by feeding a few hungry mouths. I have friendly relations with capitalists not for personal gain or in order to flatter them, but in order to get a portion of their wealth for the service of the poor. But their money cannot serve the hungry millions at present. What is the root cause of this all-India starvation? Under cover of war conditions, starving millions are being further starved. Startling as the figures that come from Bengal, Karnatak and other parts are, the distress is much deeper. None but a representative national government can cope with it. I am of the opinion that if India had been free, there would have been no war with Japan. And if there was a war, we would have dealt with it much more effectively than at present. I do not want to change masters. I want to be free from all foreign control. You must have seen the correspondence recently published. We may not be deceived by the wealth to be seen in the cities of India. It does not come from England or America. It comes from the blood of the poorest. There are said to be 700,000 villages in India. Some of them have been simply wiped out. No one has any record of these. Thousands have died of starvation and disease in Bengal, Karnatak and elsewhere. The Government registers can give us no idea of what the village folk are going through. But being a villager myself, I know the conditions in the villages. I know the village economics. I tell you that the pressure from the top crushes those at the bottom. All that is necessary is to get off their backs. This is the meaning of non-co-operation with evil. Non-violence is a mighty weapon. In action, it takes the form of civil disobedience and non-violent non-co-operation. Civil disobedience is a very potent weapon. But every one cannot wield it. For that, one needs training and inner strength. It requires occasions for its use. But non-violent non-co-operation can be practised by everybody. I have been receiving letters of a most depressing, if I have also of a stimulating character. Those who understand the secret of non-co-operation will find a ready answer for all their difficulties. We must learn resolutely to say 'no', when it becomes a duty. The hunt for wealth or for fame is not for the non-co-operator.

"Let us be patient and go through all the suffering that may be in store for us. We shall have met well this evening, if I have

succeeded in transmitting to you my faith in our cause and the means we employ for achieving it. Then there will be no room for gloom or despair."

On July 1, he attended a meeting of the trustees of Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Fund held in Poona and gave a short address. "The object of the Kasturba Memorial Fund", he observed, "is properly the welfare of village women and children." The committee decided to use the said fund and the income thereof for the welfare and education of the poor and needy women and children in the rural areas of India.

On July 2, Gandhi reached Panchgani, a hill-station near Poona, for rest. On the 11th, *Times of India* published what was said to be the interview given by Gandhi to Mr. Stewart Gelder, a correspondent of *News Chronicle*. When Gandhi read it, he thought it necessary to publish the facts and correct text of the said interview. Handing over to press representatives two statements on July 12, Gandhi explained that they were two sets of notes prepared after discussion with the British journalist. One statement was intended for publication after the journalist had communicated his impressions of Gandhi to the Viceroy and the other statement contained notes of talks which he had given Mr. Gelder to discuss with anyone who cared to understand him. The second statement which also contained the essence of the first read as follows:

"I saw Mahatma Gandhi on July 4 at Panchgani. I told him: 'My editor is anxious to help in solving the political deadlock in India. I went to Delhi and I was disappointed. I hope you will not disappoint me.' I asked: 'Supposing you saw Lord Wavell, how would you begin to talk? What would you say to him?'

"He promptly replied that he would tell the Viceroy that he had sought the interview with a view to help and not to hinder the allies and it was to this end he had asked for a permission to see the members of the Congress Working Committee. He said he had no authority to act in the name of the Congress. According to the canons of satyagraha, when a civil resister was imprisoned, the authority vested in him automatically came to an end. Hence, the need for him to see the Working Committee members.

"I said: 'The Viceroy might feel as you swear by the August Resolution and by the weapon of civil disobedience, your meeting the members of the Working Committee may only result in their

re-investing you with authority to carry on civil disobedience in the name of the Congress, and the result will be that when you came out of the interview you will hold the pistol on the Viceroy's head and say: "Do this or I start civil disobedience." That would make things worse than they are today.'

"Mr. Gandhi replied: 'At the back of that is total distrust of my profession that I am and have always been a friend of the British. Therefore, I can never use the weapon of civil disobedience during the war, unless there was a very grave reason, as, for instance, the thwarting of India's natural rights to freedom.'

"My next question was: 'Supposing the Working Committee was let out of the jail tomorrow and Government refuse to give India what they want, would you start civil disobedience?'

"Mr. Gandhi said: 'If the Working Committee came out, they would take stock of the situation and would discuss things among themselves and with me. I can tell you this that I have no intention of offering civil disobedience today. I cannot take the country back to 1942, history can never be repeated. Even without the authority of the Congress, if I wanted to do that, I could start civil disobedience today on the strength of my supposed influence with the masses. But I would be doing so merely to embarrass the British Government. This can't be my object. But the Working Committee would not sit still while people are suffering. It is my conviction that we cannot meet fully the situation and alleviate the sufferings of the people, unless power and responsibility are transferred from British into Indian hands. Without such transfer, the attempt of the Congressmen and others to alleviate the people's sufferings are most likely to lead to conflict with the Government.'

"I interrupted and said: 'When things are as they are, I cannot believe that the British will transfer the authority now, that is, the Government will not concede the demand for independence while the war is on.'

"Mr. Gandhi replied that there was a difference between what he would ask today and what was asked in 1942. Today, he would be satisfied with a national government in full control of civil administration. It was not so in 1942. Such a government would be composed of persons chosen by the elected members of the Central Assembly. This would mean the declaration of the independence of India, qualified as above during the war.

"I thought it was a great improvement on the 1942 position. I asked him if the military would control railways and the ports, etc. Mr. Gandhi replied that the national government would let the military have all the facilities that the military might require. But the control would be that of the national government. The ordinance rule would give place to normal administration by national government.

" 'Will the Viceroy be there?' I asked.

" 'Yes, but he will be like the King of England guided by responsible ministers. Popular government will be automatically restored in all the provinces so that both the provincial and central governments will be responsible to the people of India. So far as military operations are concerned, the Viceroy and the commander-in-chief will have complete control. But it must be possible for the national government to offer advice and criticisms even in military matters. Thus the portfolio of defence would be in the hands of the national government which would be genuinely interested in defence of the country and may render great assistance in the shaping of politics. The allied forces would be allowed to carry on their operations on Indian soil. I realize that they cannot defeat Japan without that.' "

"Mr. Gandhi made it clear that the expenses of the allied operation on the Indian soil should not be borne by India.

" 'If the national government is formed, would you advise the Congress to participate in it?' I asked.

"Mr. Gandhi replied in the affirmative.

"So it means that if a national government is formed the Congress will join and help war effort. What would be your position? I asked. 'I am a lover of peace through and through. After independence was assured I would probably cease to function as adviser to the Congress and as an all-war resister I would have to stand aside but I shall not offer resistance against the national government or the Congress. My co-operation will be abstention from interfering with the even tenor of life in India. I shall work with the hope that my influence will be felt to keep India peace-minded and so affect the world policy towards real peace and brotherhood among all without the distinction of race and colour.'

"Supposing there is a conflict between the civil and the military authorities, how would the dispute be settled? If, for example, the civil authorities want to use the railway to carry 2,000 tons of food

and the military authorities wanted it for carrying the munitions, what would you advise? I next asked.

"Mr. Gandhi said: 'As I said before, I would not have to advise on such matters. But supposing I had, I can conceive the necessity of allowing precedence to the military. But supposing the military wanted to blow off places or practice manoeuvres in disregard of the life of the people, I would say: "Hands off." The thing is that with mutual trust, such difficulties would not arise and if they did they would be easily adjusted. If there is no trust, I cannot work. I cannot work for the allied victory without trust. If they trusted, a settlement would be easy to achieve. Freedom for India will bring hope to Asiatics and other exploited nations. Today there is no hope for the Negroes, but Indian freedom will fill them with hope.'

"Finally, I asked: 'What about Hindu-Muslim differences?'

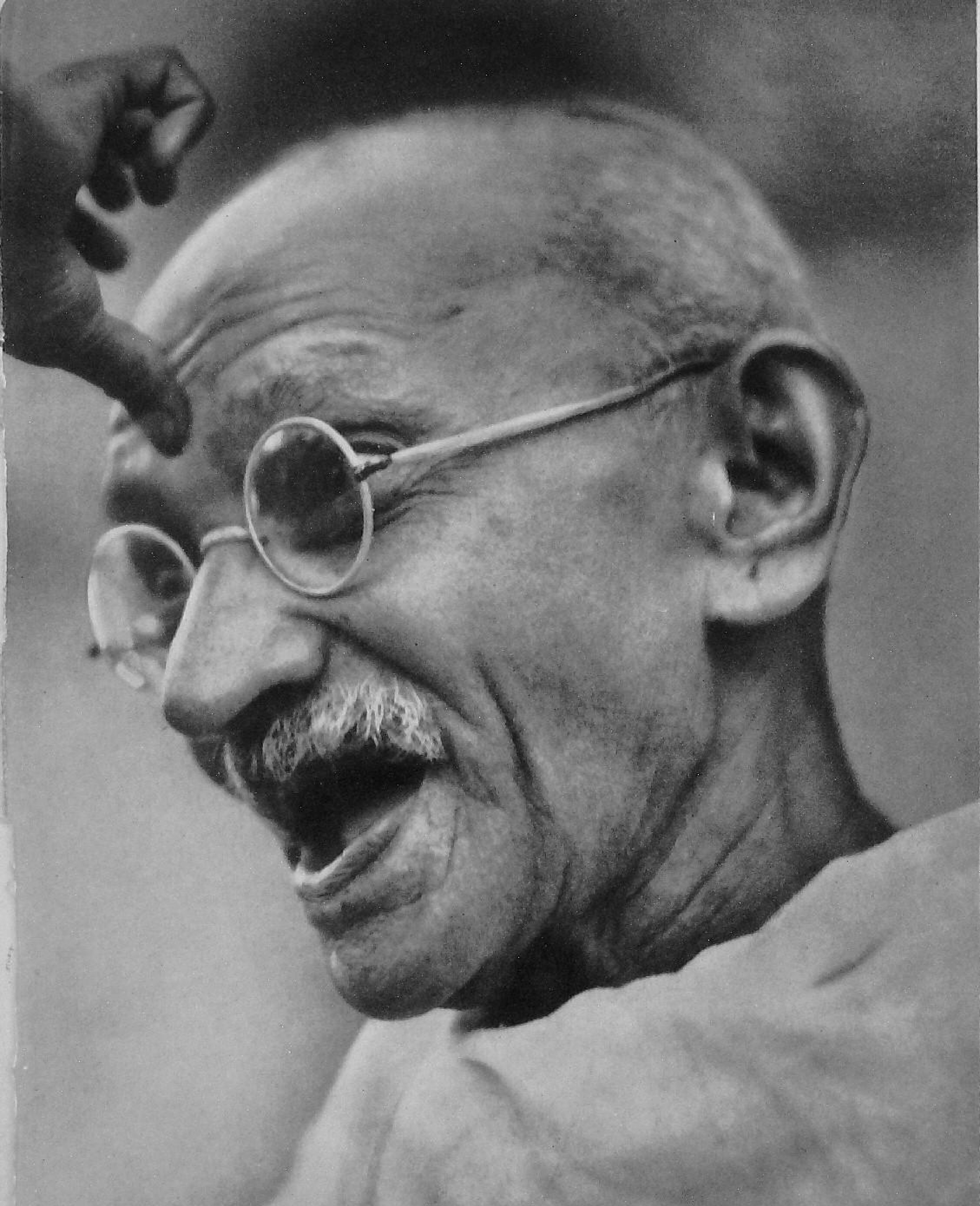
"Mr. Gandhi replied: 'If the British meant well there would be no difficulties.' Mr. Gandhi said in conclusion, 'Most of us believe that whatever H. E. the Viceroy may wish personally, he has not the authority in the political sphere. Mr. Churchill does not want a settlement. He wants to crush me if he has been correctly reported. He has never denied the report. The beauty of it for me, and the pity of it for him, is that none can crush a satyagrahi, for he offers his body as a willing sacrifice and thus makes the spirit free.' "

Gandhi issued the following statement:

"I had not authorized the publication of the interview, of even the substance. I had said that it should not be published unless I authorized its publication and in no case had I ever dreamt that the interview would be published with exclusive rights to any one paper. If it was to be published with exclusive rights, it should have been broadcast throughout India. Therefore, I had to offer that apology publicly in order to soothe myself and also to show to the press my appreciation that they have respected my desire to be left alone and also not to report anything which I had not authorized.

"My object in seeing press people is purely to advance the cause for which I am living, namely, the freedom of India through truth and non-violence. I do not seek publicity for the sake of it and just now I feel I would serve the cause better by remaining in obscurity, if such things were possible.

"Therefore, I had warned Mr. Gelder that he was not to publish anything from me unless I authorized it. He has published what he



Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

Gandhi's arrival at Gandhigram, Juhu, Bombay, May 11, 1944

Photograph : Khopker & Engineer

On the way to the prayer meeting, Juhu, May 1944

Photograph : Udit Gopal

Arrival at the prayer meeting

Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

At the prayer, Juhu, May 1944

Photograph : Khopker & Engineer

On his morning walk at the Juhu beach, May 1944

Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

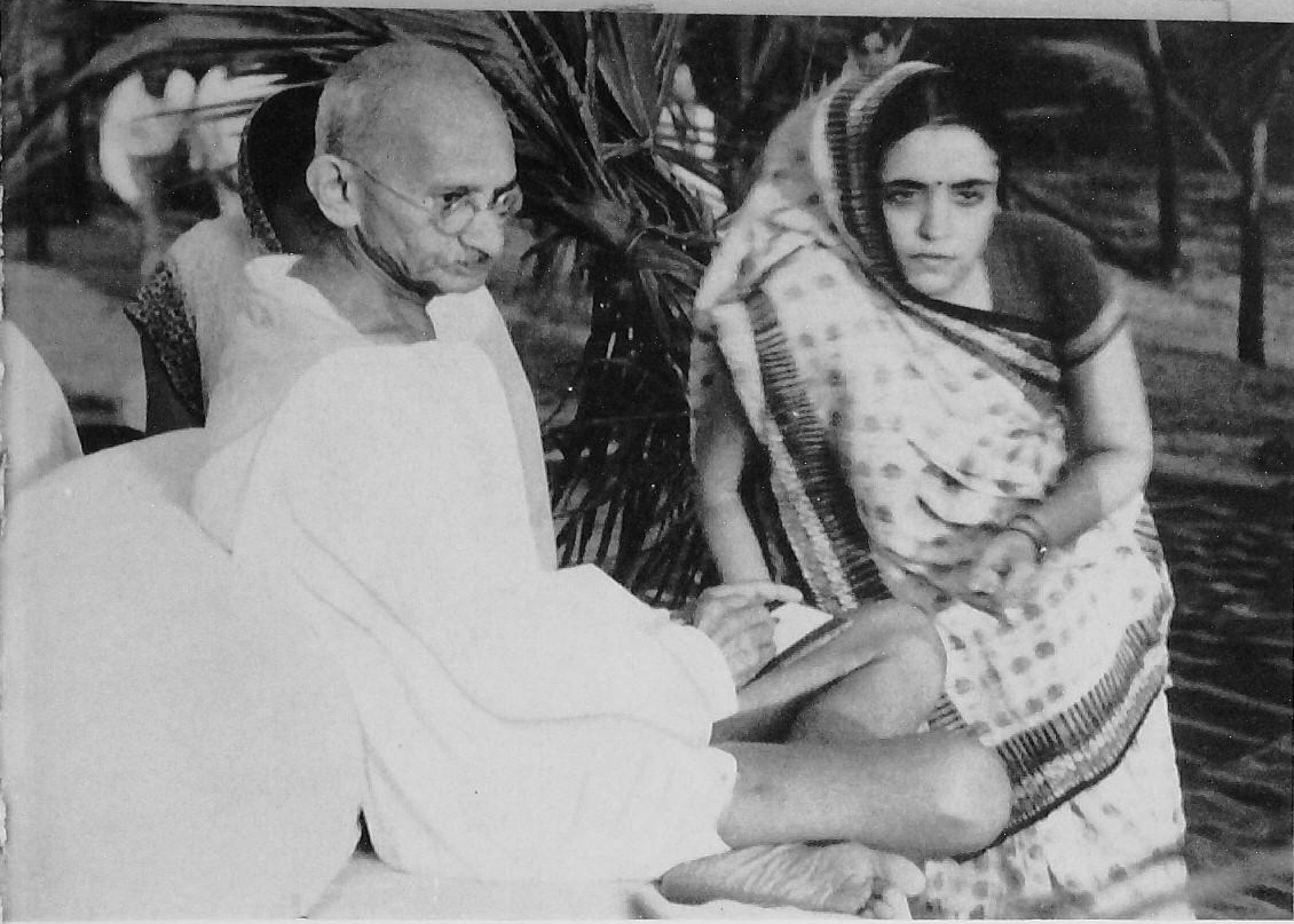
Relaxing on the Juhu beach, May 1944

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

On the Juhu beach

Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

Signing an autograph book at the prayer meeting, Juhu, May 1944



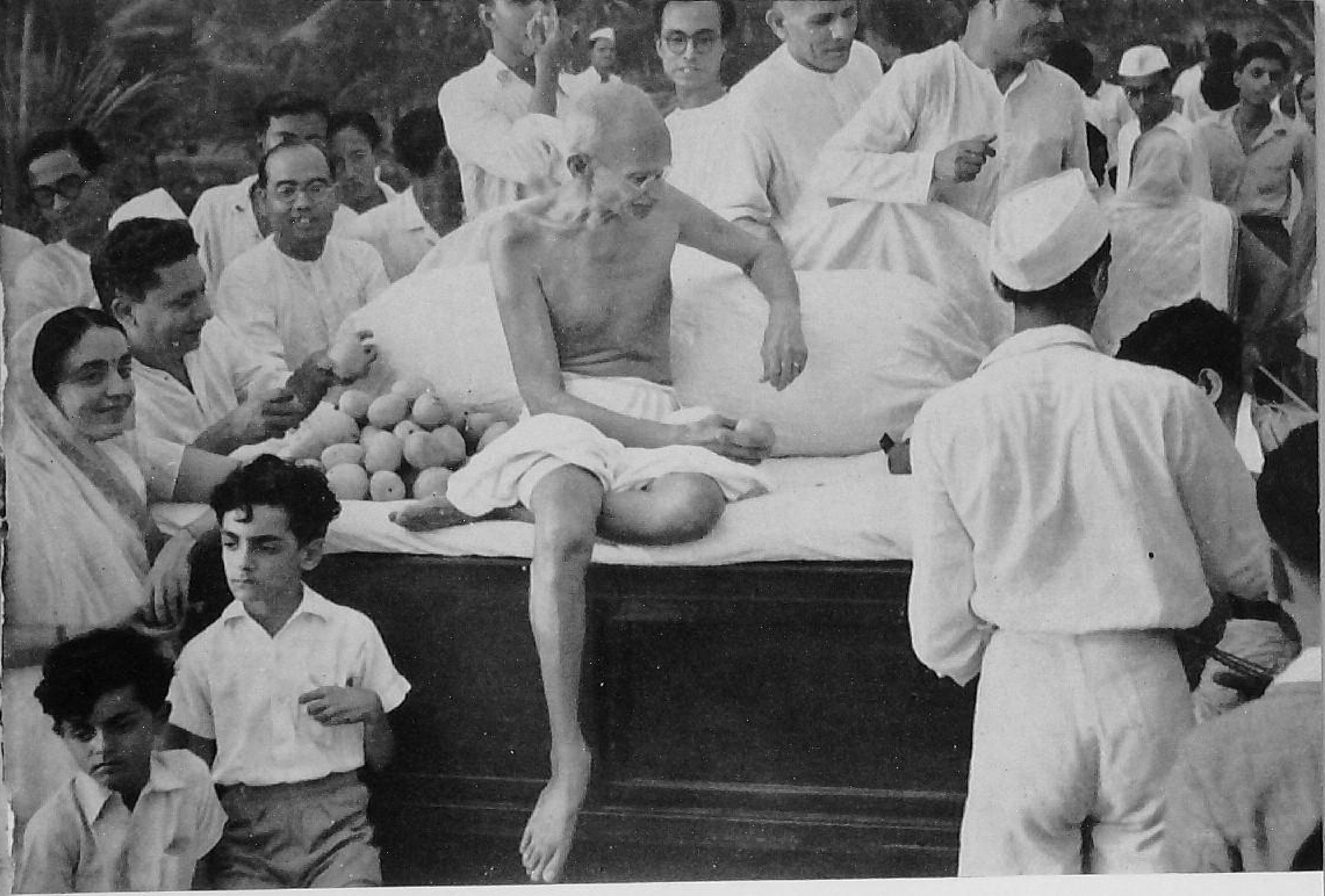
Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

With Sumati Morarjee, his hostess, at Gandhigram, Juhu, May 1944

Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

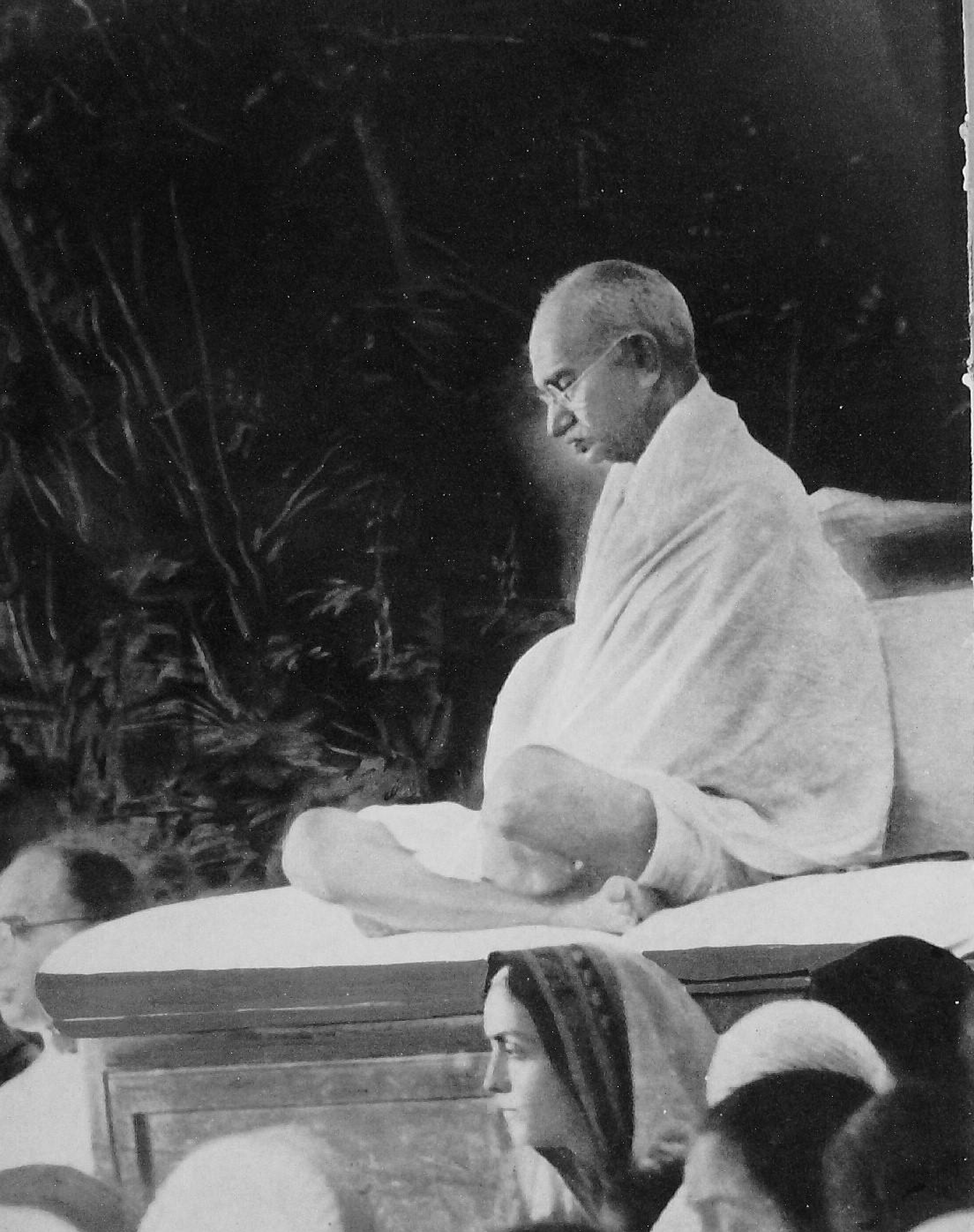
Gandhi's hut at Juhu

Dr. Gajjar explains to Gandhi the hookworm ova, Gandhigram, Juhu, May 1944



Photograph : Khopker & Engineer

Distributing mangoes to children after the prayer, Juhu, May 1944

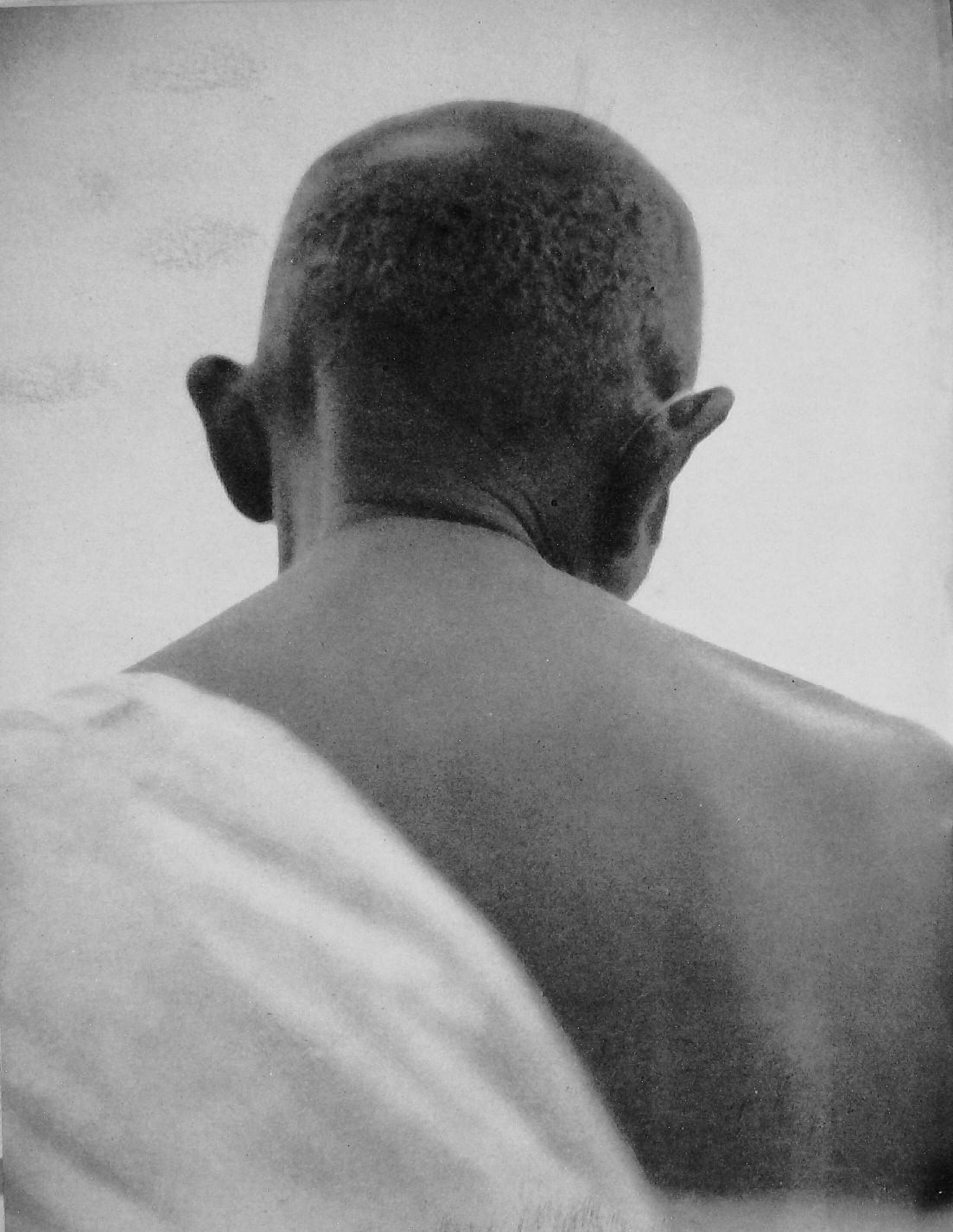


From Sumati Morarjee Collection

During the prayer, Gandhigram, Juhu, May 1944

Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

Gandhi at the evening prayer, Juhu, June 1944



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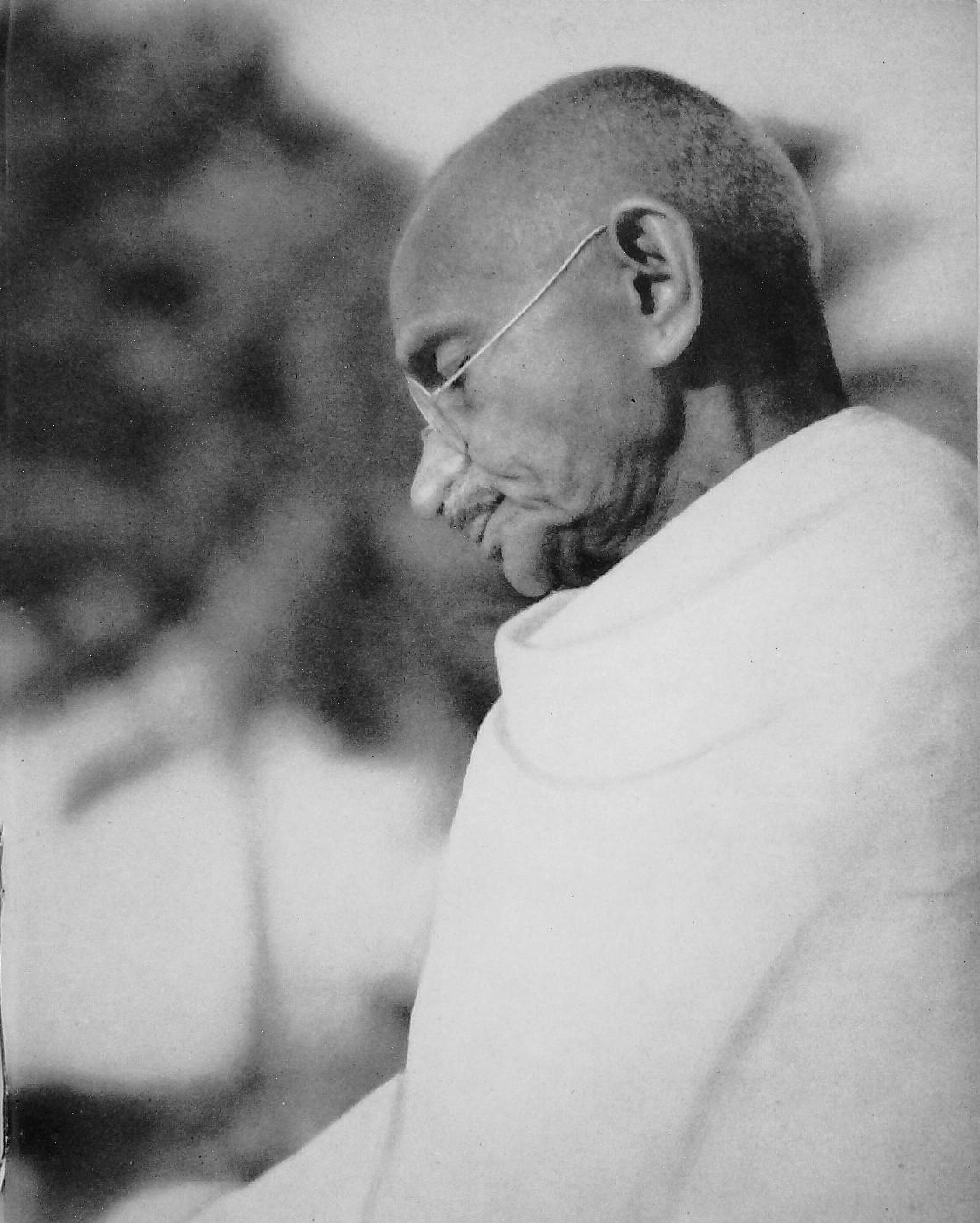
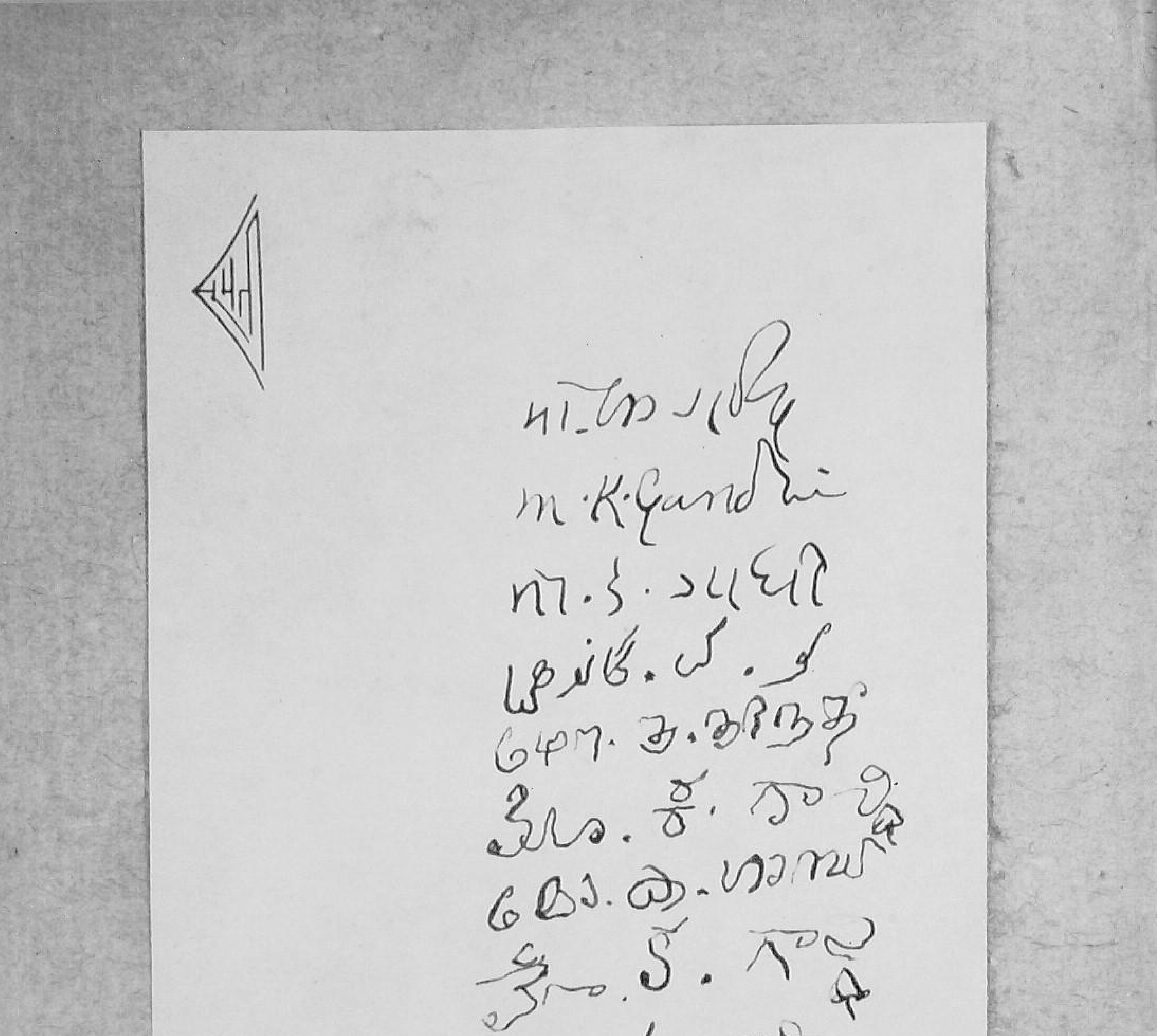


Photographs : D. R. D. Wadia

prayer



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi's autograph in eleven scripts—Devanagari, Roman, Gujarati, Persian, Tamil, Old Kanarese, Malayalam, Telugu, Kanarese, Bengali, Oriya—for this book at the request of his hostess, June 1944

Photograph : Khopker & Engineer

During his morning and evening walks at Juhu, June 1944

"Sunder Bun",
Gandhigram,
Juhu,
10th June, 1944.

Dear Friend,

I send you herewith in two volumes copies of correspondence between the Government of India or the Bombay Government and myself during my incarceration in the palace of H.H. the Agakhan in Yeravada.

The second volume is a copy of my reply to the Government of India pamphlet entitled "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43". The first contains copies of correspondence arising out of the above mentioned reply and on miscellaneous matters of public importance.

I had the copies cyclostyled with the help of kind friends. For fear of censorship difficulties, I did not try to have the copies printed at any printing press. But lest the Government of India may think that there is anything in the correspondence objectionable from military standpoint I am circulating for private use only the copies among friends who, I think, should know the nature of the correspondence that took place between the two Governments and me. You are free to show your copy to any friends you like, subject to the precaution that applies to you.

You will confer on me a favour if you will take the trouble of letting me have your reaction upon the correspondence especially upon the points arising from my reply to Government of India pamphlet. I have endeavoured to answer every item of importance in the Government indictment. I should like to know the points, if any, which require elucidation.

Yours sincerely,

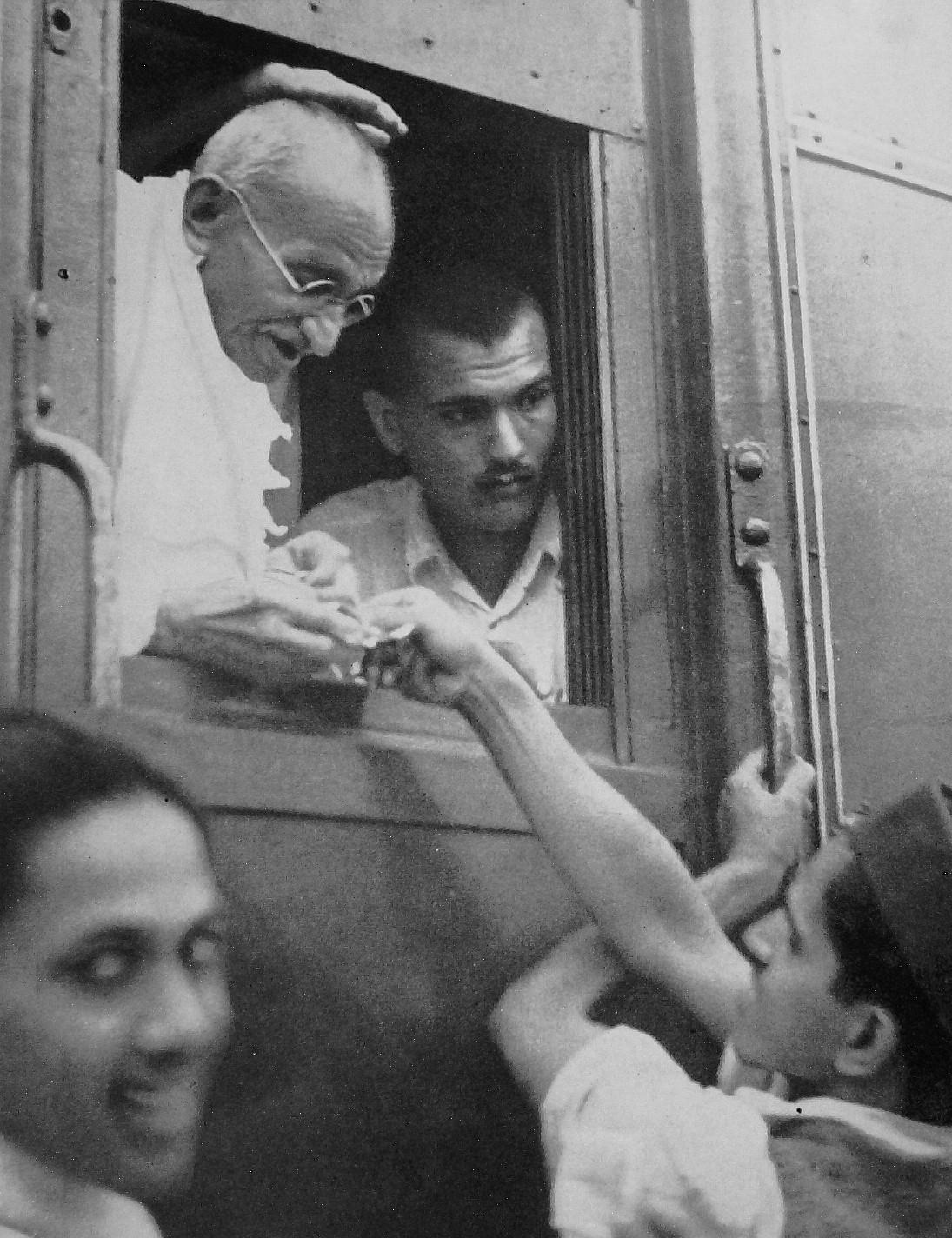
M K Gandhi

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

A covering letter dated Juhu, June 10, 1944 sent along with the cyclostyled copies of Gandhi's correspondence with the Government of India during his detention at Aga Khan Palace

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Some of his few possessions presented to his hostess at Gandhigram, Juhu, 1944



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Collecting money for the Harijan Fund on his way to Poona, June 15, 1944

has, I have no doubt, with the best of intentions, but somehow or other I feel, he has not served the cause as well as he might have. I passed nearly three hours with him distributed over three days in order that he might know the whole of my mind. I believed him and still believe him to be a well-wisher of India as he is a lover of his own country, and I accepted his word entirely when he told me that he approached me not as a journalist principally, but as one desiring to see that the political deadlock was resolved. Whilst I declared my views with absolute freedom, I told him that his first business should be to go to Delhi and if he could reach the Viceregal throne, he should see the Viceroy and give him what impressions he had gathered. Having himself failed to get an interview with the Viceroy, I felt that Mr. Gelder, being a reporter of a prominent English daily, might be able to serve the cause.

"Even in South Africa, where I was working in a hostile atmosphere, I was fortunate enough to get the journalists and editors to help me when they became impressed by my earnestness and the justice of my cause. I was handling the disabilities of the Indians in South Africa. The publication, therefore, at this stage, of an abstract of two interviews seems to me to be misfired. You will see that Mr. Gelder has compressed the two statements in the report published by him. You will notice also that there are some glaring inaccuracies in the report as published. I want to guard myself against being understood as accusing Mr. Gelder of any wilful distortion. But I have found it times without number during my public life covering a period of over fifty years that my statements do not admit of being easily abridged or paraphrased. In 1907, I nearly lost my life when Reuter sent an abridged summary of the pamphlet I had written and distributed in India in 1906. Fortunately, my life was spared when I was lynched, and I was able to show that the case based against me on the strength of that summary was utterly wrong. Here the abridgement has no such mischievous consequences. I recall the South African incident in order to emphasize my point. All my life, I have handled what seemed to be forlorn causes. I have been also a fairly successful journalist, but I did not embark upon that calling for a living.

"It was a venture in order to advertise the cause I was handling and I gave this long preface before handing the two statements to the fellow journalists in the hope that they would respond to my

earnest wish that they would co-operate with me in dealing with the situation which, if properly handled, may yield promising results for mankind.

"I was ill-prepared for this ordeal that is in front of me. I am in Panchgani trying to rebuild my broken body. The desire not to see statements published at this stage was also prompted by regard for my health. I want to get well quickly and to be in full working order. Since things are so shaping themselves that I might not be able to carry out that with misunderstandings.

"I have kept you, gentlemen, away from me and you have been very kind to me. You have waited in the hope that some day I would satisfy your natural inquisitiveness. I am afraid that you will be perhaps oversatiated because if your chiefs still keep you here, you will give me daily summary of reactions in the press. I do not expect that I shall want to deal with them all, but in so far as there is misunderstanding I will have to remove them if I possibly can.

"I stand by every word that appeared in the two statements I have given to you, but I speak on behalf of no one but myself."

Gandhi met the pressmen at Panchgani on July 13 and explained to them the Gelder interview:

"Some have said that I have admitted that the August Resolution has lapsed. Not only have I never said it, on the contrary, at the Maharashtra workers' meeting I made it clear, that not a comma of that resolution could be altered by anybody except those who passed it, namely, the Congress Working Committee and finally the A.-I.C.C. What I have said and what I now re-affirm is that my authority under the resolution had undoubtedly lapsed according to my view of the working of satyagraha.

"The premature publication of the interview to Mr. Gelder has led to some confusion in the minds of Congressmen. Let me make it clear that the lapsing of my authority has nothing to do with the normal activities of the Congress. What no one can do in the name of the Congress is mass civil disobedience, which was never started and which, as I have said, I cannot at the present moment, even in my personal capacity, start.

"The 'Quit India' resolution I hold to be absolutely innocuous. The Gelder interview notes now published are in no way in conflict with the 'Quit India' resolution, as I have interpreted it and as the joint author of it I have every right to interpret it.

"The question before me and all India is how to implement the resolution at the present time, that is, two years after the passing of the resolution. The Gelder interview notes show the way how it can be done in a perfectly honourable manner. Those who approve of the stand I have taken up will naturally support it. People having difficulty are free to refer to me, but their approval of the stand taken by me must not be interpreted to mean suspension of the normal activities of the Congress, and if the Government interfere with those activities the inherent right of individual civil disobedience is in no way suspended under the statement referred to by me. The statements constitute my individual effort to end the present deadlock. They are more addressed to the powers that be than to the people. If there is a hearty response, there will be no occasion for civil disobedience, individually or not."

Answering the question put by a reporter, whether the Cripps proposals could be compared with his recent statement, he said:

"My proposal is wholly different. The Cripps proposals were unacceptable to me for the simple reason that they contemplated almost perpetual vivisection of India and would have created an effective barrier against Indian independence. I want to say this without the slightest disrespect to Sir Stafford. He still remains to me the same friend that he claimed to be when he was here. For me, friendships abide in spite of political differences.

"One fundamental element in my attitude is that I shall never be a party to the sale of the rights of the people of the states for the sake of freedom of the people of British India. At the same time, I am no enemy of the princes. I consider myself to be their friend if anybody cares to understand. I am quite prepared to suggest a solution at once honourable to them and to the people."

"I live for a cause, and if I perish, it is for the cause," he said in an informal talk reiterating his faith in the destiny of free India. A reporter said that it might be that His Majesty's Government did not, for the duration of the war, entertain any idea for the transference of power and it was feared that Mr. Jinnah would not be agreeable to accept Gandhi's suggestion, because a national government might, in his opinion, consolidate the position of the Hindus in the Centre. Gandhi exclaimed: "If Mr. Jinnah does not accept my suggestion or if the powers that be do not, I would consider it most unfortunate. That would show that neither of them

wants India to be really free at this juncture and give India a full share in winning the war for freedom and democracy. I myself feel firmly that Mr. Jinnah does not block the way, but the British Government do not want a just settlement of the Indian claim for independence which is overdue and they are using Mr. Jinnah as a cloak for denying freedom to India."

"I have the firmest faith," he declared, "that the allies may win the war in the trial of brute strength, because brute strength when applied to limitless finances will naturally be supreme, but it will be only a physical victory and lead to another world war. This is the outpouring of a lacerated heart."

Asserting that there was no conflict between the principles defined in the August Resolution and what he had suggested in the recent interview, Gandhi told pressmen on July 14:

"I have received bitter criticism of my views, expressed in the Gelder interview. Some of my correspondents say that under the influence of moderates and moneyed men I have betrayed the cause of our country. If for nothing else for dealing with such critics, I am glad of the premature publication of the interview.

"I do not want to sail under false colours. The country as well as the Government should know me exactly as I am. I have never concealed the fact that I am a friend of everybody—moderates, moneyed men, Englishmen, Americans or any other, irrespective of caste or colour or persuasion. My belief and practice are directly derived from non-violence. My non-co-operation is non-co-operation with evil, not with the evil-doer. And underneath my non-co-operation is my earnest desire to wean the evil-doer from the evil or harm he is doing, so that I can give him hearty co-operation. Again, if I associate with the so-called moderates or with moneyed men, I do so to seek their co-operation in the cause I am handling. But I approach them with an open mind, so that I correct myself where I find myself in the wrong. I have known of no cause that I have espoused that has suffered because of such association.

"Some critics have suggested that by my present attitude, I am lending moral weight to the allied cause. But they forget that my offer, such as it is, is subject to the condition that the allies, in this case the British Government, should recognize full independence qualified during the pendency of the war. I see, therefore, no conflict between the principles enunciated in the August Resolution

and what I have now suggested. May I suggest to critics that they should wait till the British Government have spoken. The statements made by me were meant in the first instance for the Government. Mr. Gelder sprung a surprise. He has done so with the best of motives. After all, there is a higher power ruling all the actions of human beings."

A journalist remarked that it had been said by a large section of the foreign press that Gandhi had revised his attitude because of favourable war situation and because the Congress suffered a heavy defeat. Gandhi replied:

"Let me remind the critics at the outset that publicity of the interview to Mr. Stuart Gelder was not of my seeking. As I have already remarked, it was meant for the powers that be. I ask for a dispassionate examination of my proposals on their own merits. I should not mind a climb-down, if it resulted in the attainment of Indian independence. I may say that the favourable war situation had nothing to do with my proposal, if only for the simple reason that, in the flush of approaching victory, my proposal was not likely even to receive a hearing. But as a lover of peace, not merely in India but peace among all mankind, I could not but make a proposal for what it is worth. After all, there is such a thing as world opinion, apart from the opinion of authorities.

"A united, enlightened, powerful opinion of the world is bound to affect those who are today wielding what appears to be absolute power in waging the war, and experience has taught me that one should not be afraid of being misunderstood or of rejection of one's proposals if it is sound in itself.

"The heavy defeat of the Congress I do not feel at all. I have not a shadow of doubt that this passage through fire and suffering by thousands of Congressmen and the Congress sympathizers has raised the status of India and the strength of the people. Throughout all my long public life, I have not experienced a sense of defeat, heavy or otherwise. I know that many Congressmen are labouring under a sense of frustration. Poor men, they do not know the value of self-suffering. But even that frustration is only momentary. The victory, that is, independence of India as a whole, is a certainty. That it may not come in my life-time is a matter of indifference to me. I can but work for it till the end of my life. Victory will come when God wills it.

"Only today I wrote to a friend who wanted to know the difference between now and August 1942. From it I quote relevant sentences. I have said the difference between now and August 1942 is that at the time I had no knowledge of the response the people, both pro-Congress and anti-Congress, would make. Now I know the kind of response the people made. Heroism, suffering, and self-sacrifice of those who took part in this struggle are beyond praise, but weighed in the scale of truth and non-violence there are glaring defects in the popular demonstration. And I can only say that India failed to reach her natural goal at the time because of the defects. Whatever may be true of other nations, I have no doubt that India can come to her own fully by truth and non-violent means. In the face of sabotage and the like, rulers have as usual lost their heads and resorted to reprisals unheard of before. I write this under correction. I have asked for an impartial tribunal for the investigation of charges against the Congress and my counter-charges against the Government. Unless I am convinced to the contrary, I shall continue to believe that the molehill of popular violence has been shown on behalf of Government to have been a mountain and the Himalayan violence of authorities has been generally defended as no more than necessary for the occasion. I must, therefore, refuse to judge popular action by the foot-rule of truth and non-violence unless I can apply the same measure for Government action. This is one difference. The second difference is the terrible progressive starvation of the people. Whether it is due to wrath of God or incompetence of rulers or universal pressure of war is not relevant to the elucidation of my reply. I hold that these two causes mark decisive differences between now and August 1942. I would be unworthy of my creed, if I failed to make use of all the resources of head and heart that God has vouchsafed to me for discovering a solution of the deadlock. What is that solution is submitted by me. It is nothing less than the present declaration of freedom of India, limited during the war period by the exigencies of the war. This limitation you know. If the offer is accepted, then I would be criminally guilty if I did not advise the Congress to accept it.

"If my proposal reaches full fruition, what is today a war of brute strength would be turned into a war for the liberation of the exploited peoples of the world. Then it would be a war between predominantly moral strength, plus the minimum of brute strength,

marched against pure brute strength which is being used for the exploitation of China and the weaker states of Europe.

"Finally, I would say to my critics to enter with me into the sufferings, not only of the people of India, but of those whether engaged in the war or not, of the whole world. I cannot look at this butchery going on in the world with indifference. I have an unchangeable faith that it is beneath the dignity of men to resort to mutual slaughter. I have no doubt that there is a way out. I am vain enough to think that my malaria was godsend, and He used Government as His instrument for discharging me.

"I should be never reconciled to myself if, for fear of the hostile criticism or wrath of impatient Congressmen or even possible displeasure of members of the Working Committee, I did not express personal opinion, the acceptance of which I hold must result in bringing peace to the world, even out of the present turmoil."

On July 15, Gandhi wrote the following letter to Lord Wavell:

"You have no doubt seen the authentic copies now published in the Indian press of the statements given by me to Mr. Gelder of *News Chronicle*. As I have told the press, they were meant primarily to be shown to you. But Mr. Gelder, no doubt, with the best of motives gave the interview premature publicity. I am sorry. The publication will nevertheless be a blessing in disguise, if the interview enables you to grant at least one of my requests contained in my letter of June 17, 1944."

The Viceroy replied: "I have seen the statements you made to Mr. Gelder, and your subsequent explanation of them. But I do not think I can usefully comment at present except to repeat what I said in my first letter that if you will submit to me a definite and constructive policy, I shall be glad to consider it."

On July 27, Gandhi wrote again to Lord Wavell:

"I am prepared to advise the Working Committee to declare that, in view of the changed conditions, mass civil disobedience envisaged by the resolution of August 1942, cannot be offered and that full co-operation in the war effort should be given by the Congress, if a declaration of immediate Indian independence is made and a national government responsible to the Central Assembly be formed subject to the proviso that during the pendency of war, the military operations should continue as at present, but without involving any financial burden on India. If there is a desire on

the part of the British Government for a settlement, friendly talks should take the place of correspondence. But I am in your hands. I shall continue to knock, so long as there is the least hope of an honourable settlement.

"After the foregoing was written, I saw Lord Munster's speech in the House of Lords. The summary given by him in the House of Lords fairly represents my proposal. This summary may serve as a basis for mutual friendly discussion."

The Viceroy replied:

"His Majesty's Government remain most anxious that a settlement of Indian problem should be reached. But proposals such as those put forward by you are quite unacceptable to His Majesty's Government as a basis for discussion and you must realize this if you have read Mr. Amery's statement in the House of Commons on July 28 last. They are, indeed, very similar to the proposals made by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to Sir Stafford Cripps in April 1942 and His Majesty's Government's reasons for rejecting them are the same as they were then.

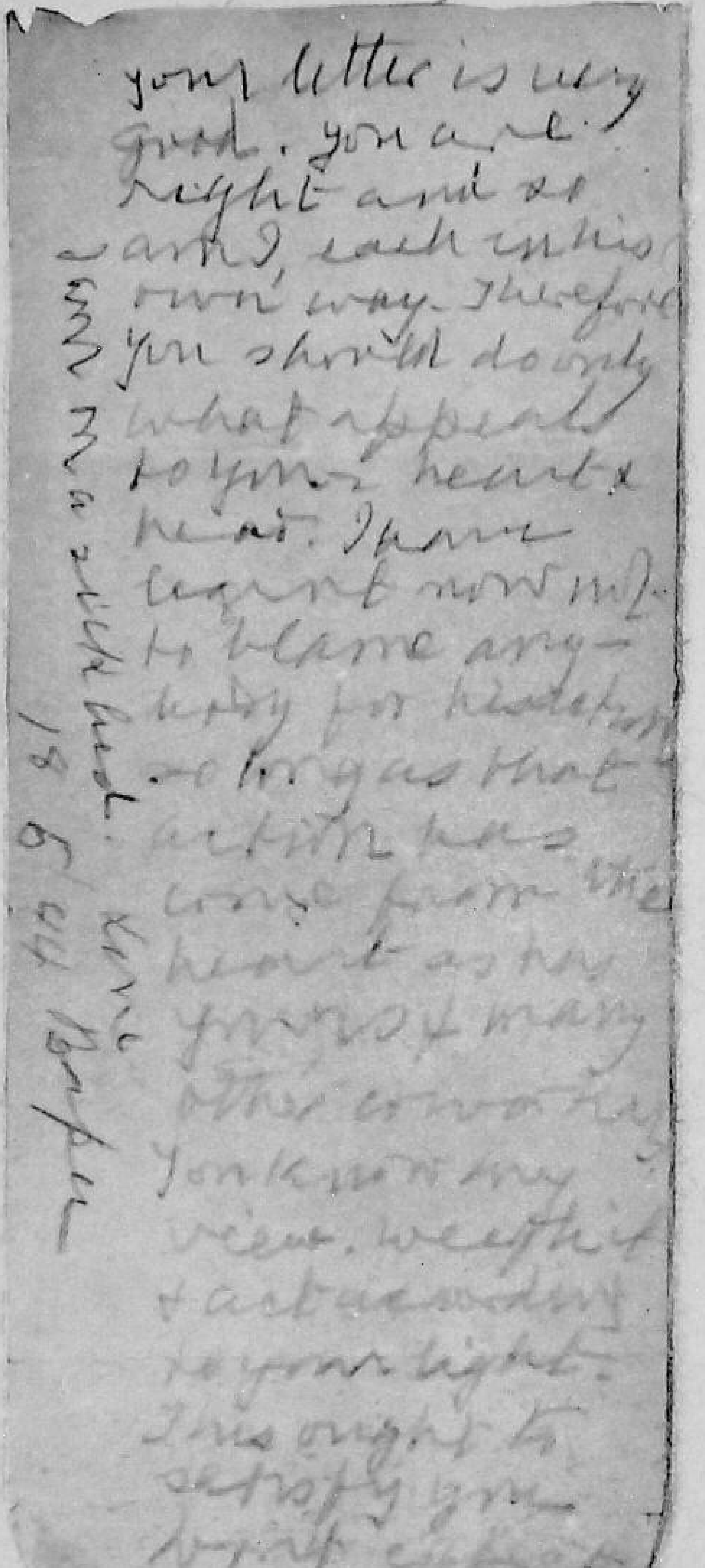
"Without recapitulating all these reasons in detail, I should remind you that His Majesty's Government at that time made this clear: (a) That their offer of unqualified freedom after the cessation of hostilities was made conditional upon the framing of a constitution agreed by the main elements of India's national life and the negotiation of the necessary treaty arrangements with His Majesty's Government; (b) That it is impossible during the period of hostilities to bring about any change in the constitution, by which means alone a national government, such as you suggest, could be made responsible to the Central Assembly.

"The object of these conditions was to ensure the fulfilment of their duty to safeguard the interests of the radical and the religious minorities and of the Depressed Classes, and their treaty obligations to the Indian states.

"It was upon the above conditions that His Majesty's Government invited Indian leaders to take part in an interim government which would operate under the existing constitution. I must make it quite clear that until the war is over, responsibility for defence and military operations cannot be divided from the other responsibilities of the Government, and that until hostilities cease and the new constitution is in operation, His Majesty's Government and

Photograph : Khopker & Engineer

At the Nature Cure Clinic, Poona, June 15, 1944

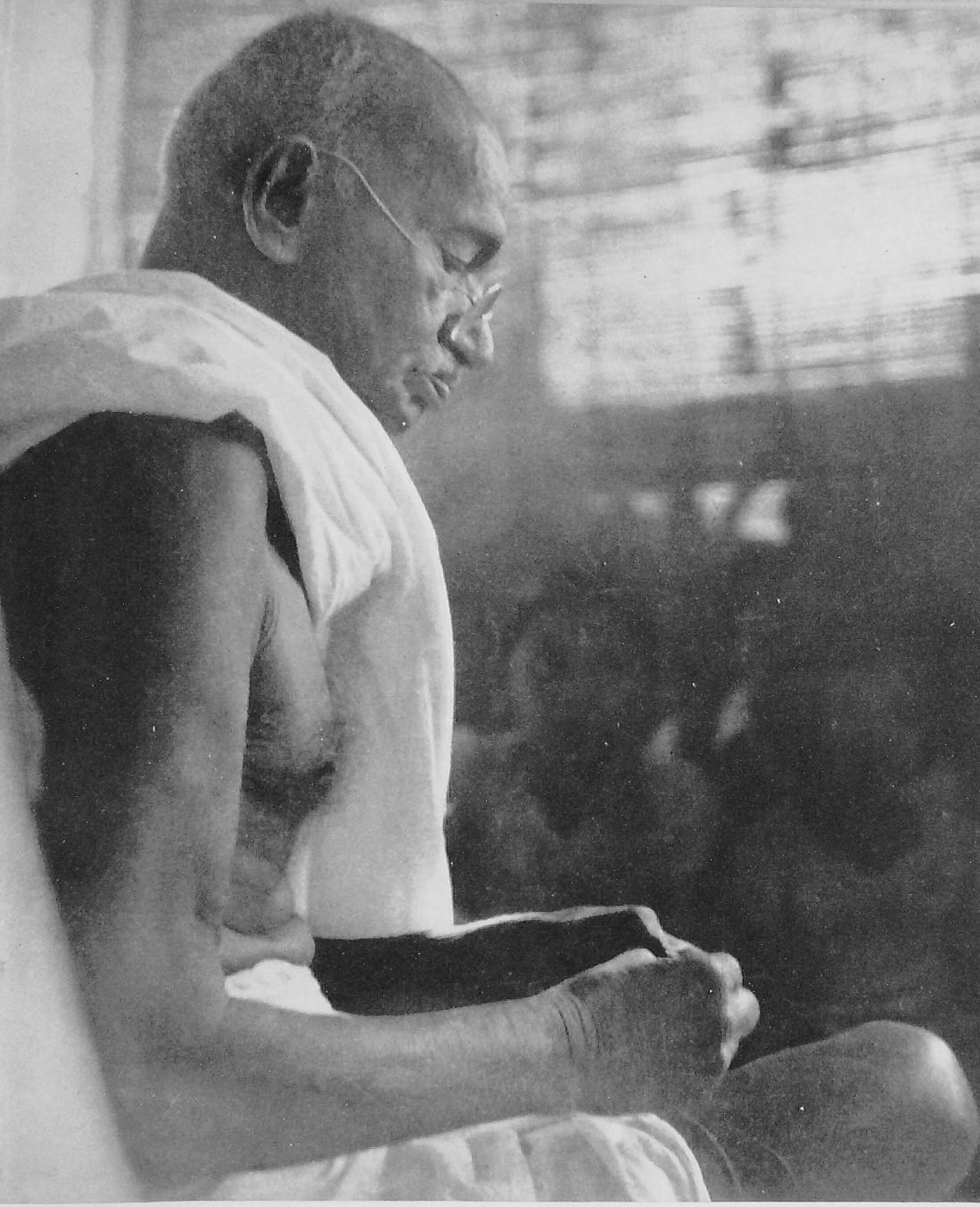


Your letter is very good. You are right and so am I, each in his own way. Therefore you should do only what appeals to your heart & head. I have begun now not to blame anybody for his action so long as that action has come from the heart as has yours & many other coworkers. You know my view. Weigh it & act according to your light. This ought to satisfy you. Don't expect orders from me especially while

I am in a sick bed. Love Bapu 18 6 44

Courtesy: R. R. Diwakar

Gandhi's letter to R. R. Diwakar, dated June 18, 1944



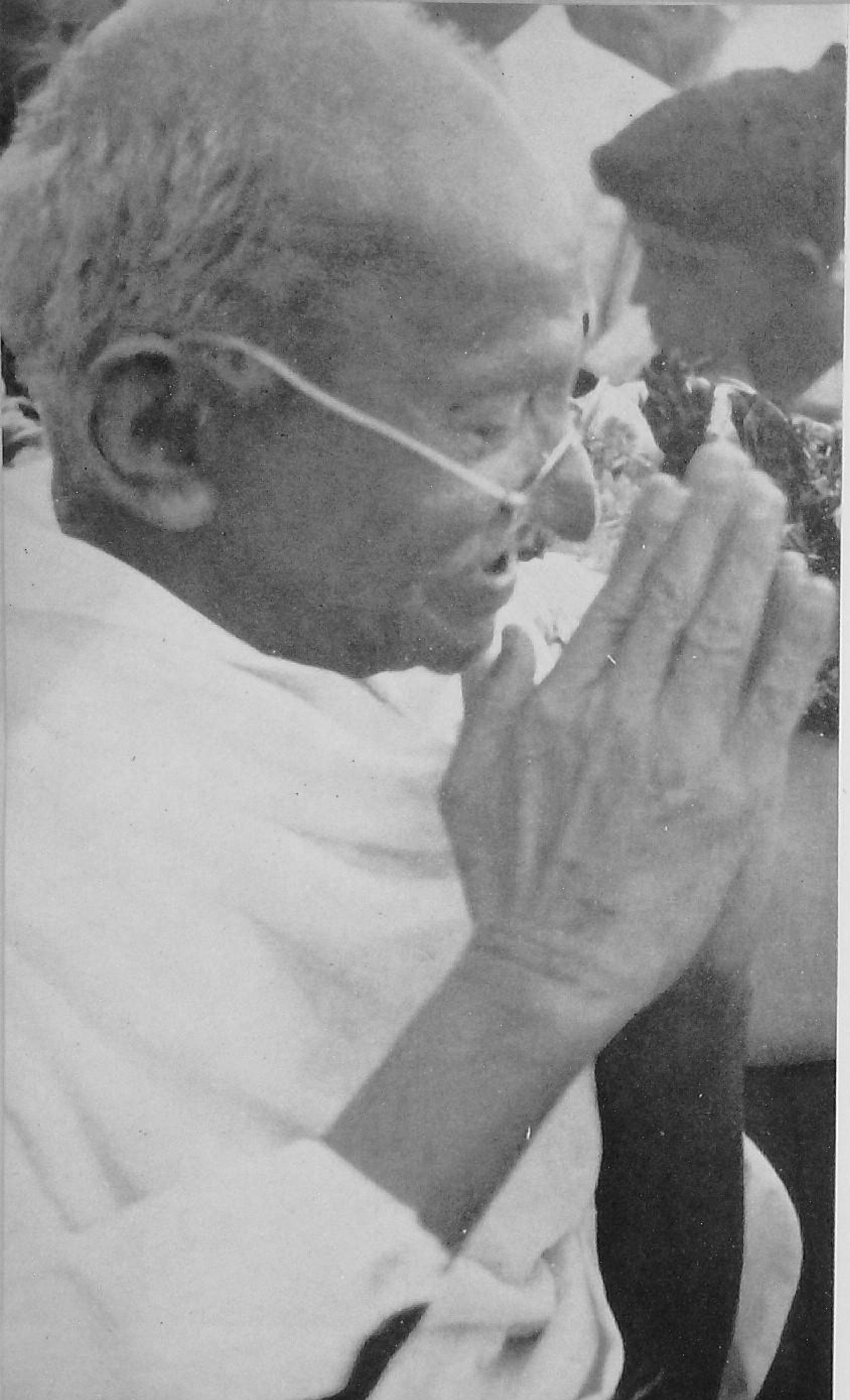
Photograph : R. V. Pandit

Gandhi mends a thread of a spinning wheel, Panchagani, July 1944

On his morning walk

Photographs : R. V. Pandit

at Panchagani, July 1944

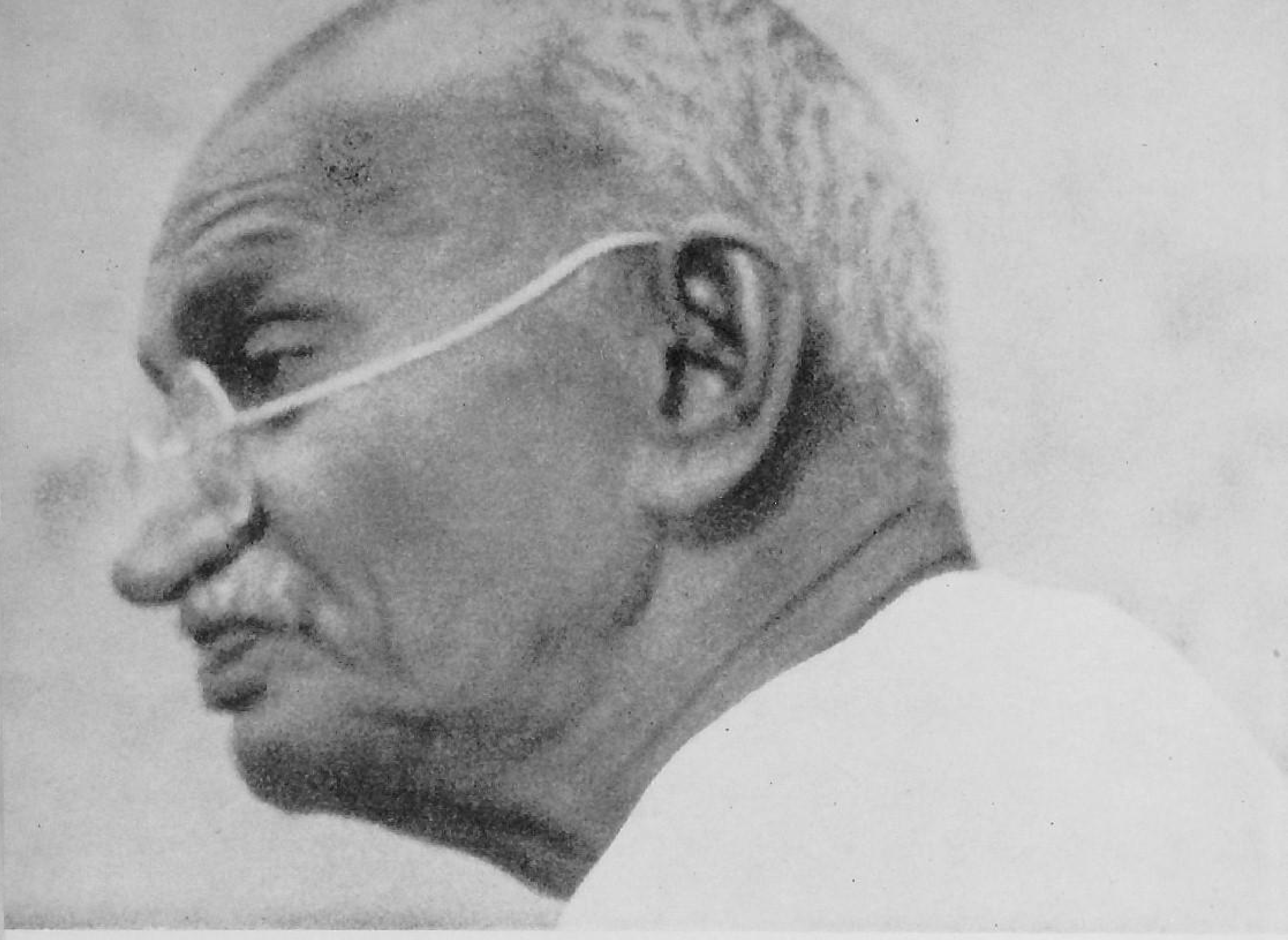


Photograph : R. V. Pandit

Greeting the people at Panchagani, July 1944

Photograph : R. V. Pandit

Without his spectacles



Photograph : R. V. Pandit

Gandhi, Panchagani, 1944

the Governor-General must retain their responsibility over the entire field. So far as the question of India's share of the cost of the war is concerned, this is essentially a matter for settlement between His Majesty's Government on the one hand and the Government of India on the other, and existing financial arrangements can only be reported at the instance of one or the other.

"It is clear, in these circumstances, that no purpose would be served by discussion on the basis which you suggest. If, however, the leaders of the Hindus, Muslims and important minorities were willing to co-operate in a transitional government established and working within the present constitution, I believe good progress might be made. But for such a transitional government to succeed, there must, before it is formed, be agreement in principle between Hindus and Muslims and all important elements as to the method by which the new constitution should be framed. This agreement is a matter for Indians themselves. Until the Indian leaders have come closer together than they are now, I doubt if I myself can do anything to help. Let me remind you that the minority problems are not easy. They are real and can be solved only by mutual compromise and tolerance.

"The period after the termination of the hostilities for which the transitional government would last would depend on the speed with which the new constitution could be framed. I see no reason why the preliminary work on that constitution should not begin as soon as the Indian leaders are prepared to co-operate to that end. If they can arrive at a genuine agreement as to the method of framing the constitution, no unnecessary time need be spent after the war in reaching final conclusions and in agreeing on the treaty arrangements with His Majesty's Government. There again, the primary responsibility rests on the Indian leaders."

Commenting on the Viceroy's reply, Gandhi stated: "The Viceroy's proposition means that unless all the main parties agree as to the constitution of the future, and there is an agreement between the British Government and all the main parties, there is to be no change in the constitutional position, and the Government of India as at present is to be carried on. The names of parties given in the Government reply are illustrations only. I have no doubt that on due occasions, more will be exhibited as from a conjurer's bag, and who knows how and when the British Government will

agree to surrender control. It is as clear as crystal that the British Government do not propose to give up the power they possess over the 400 millions, unless the latter develops strength enough to wrest it from them. I shall never lose hope that India will do so by purely moral means."

In an interview on the debate on India in Parliament, late in July, Gandhi said:

"It has caused me pain and amazement that the representatives of the British nation, who have a long and distinguished record of heroic fight for political freedom, should divorce the economic development of India from political subjection and give the former preference over the latter. To me it looks like putting the cart before the horse, and I have not yet seen any horse performing the trick of pushing the cart with its nose. It was, therefore, a pleasure to find two noted industrialists, Mr. J. R. D. Tata and Sir Homi Modi, summarily rejecting the idea put forth in the House of Commons and holding out, I suppose, from bitter experience, that the economic development of India was dependent upon the solution of the political deadlock, in other words a proper national government functioning at the centre. I suppose they had in mind the gigantic concessions that have been made during recent years to the British monopolists. They must have had in mind also the strangling of the Indian enterprise. What can be, therefore, happen without a national government is not the economic development of India, but its exploitation.

"I hold that in spite of all the honesty that the British rulers can summon to their assistance, it is impossible for them to get behind Indian skin and know the real disease. The consensus of opinion in the House of Commons, therefore, is for me a terrible pointer. It confirms me, in my opinion, that the 'Quit India' resolution was no hasty cry, conceived in anger. To put the same in the parliamentary language, it demands that India must be now governed by Indians chosen by her own people, not a coterie but the whole mass of people without distinction of race or creed or colour. It is unfortunate that the House of Commons has once more missed the opportunity of making the issue between the allied powers and the Axis powers a real issue of democracy versus autocracy, or the exploitation of the classes or nations by a class or a nation armed to the teeth. My offer presented that issue in the clearest possible

language that I could command. It was presented on behalf of all the exploited nations and races of the earth. It is a great pity that the Lords and the Commons turned down my offer. The allies will have their victory, but the exploited races will not feel the glow of it. They will know that the seeds of another and deadlier war will be sown by that very victor. I ask myself the question, 'Must rivers of blood flow for such an empty victory?' "

Gandhi told the communists some home truth about their stand with regard to the war which they called the "people's war". In a letter to Mr. P. C. Joshi, he wrote: "I understand that although the chief actors among the allied powers are by no means inclined towards real democracy, you think that by the time the war ends their designs will be confounded and that the people all the world over will suddenly find self-expression and overthrow the present leaders. In the peoples, I am entitled to include us, other Asiatics and Negroes, for that matter perhaps also the proletariat of Japan and Germany. If such is your belief, I must confess that I do not share it, but I keep myself open to conviction. Meanwhile, I suggest that the title 'people's war' is highly misleading. It enables the Government in India to claim that at least one popular party considers this as the people's war. I suggest too that Russia's limited alliance with the allied powers cannot by any stretch of imagination convert what was before an imperialistic war against the Nazi combine into a people's war." He concluded:

"Holding the view I do, it is superfluous for me now to answer your argument that 'this war has split the world into two camps'. Between Scylla and Charybdis, if I sail in either direction, I suffer shipwreck. Therefore, I have to be in the midst of the storm. I suggested a way out. Naturally, it has been rejected, because the powers that be do not want to relax their grip on India."

Gandhi-Jinnah Talks

1944

Gandhi appealed to all fair-minded people to break what he called "the diabolical conspiracy to stifle India's aspirations". The British Government's rejection of his offer, Gandhi said, did not affect in any way his efforts to come to terms with Jinnah. "A proper heart-to-heart agreement between us," said Gandhi, "can induce revision even of the firm refusal of the British Government as conveyed through His Excellency's letter."

Coincident with Gandhi-Gelder interview were certain negotiations that Rajagopalachari had been carrying on with Jinnah. On July 10, 1944, Rajagopalachari published a formula which had been discussed with and had been approved by Gandhi during his fast in 1943 and which he had communicated to Jinnah in April 1944. The formula was intended to serve as a basis for a settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League. Its provisions were: (1) The Muslim League was to endorse the demand for independence for the transitional period. (2) At the end of the war, a commission would demarcate those contiguous areas in North-West and North-East India in which the Muslims were in an absolute majority, and in those areas a plebiscite of all the inhabitants would decide whether or not they should be separated from Hindustan. (3) In the event of separation, agreements would be made for defence, commerce, communications and other essential purposes. (4) The terms should be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the governance of India.

Jinnah, while willing to place this formula before the League, said that he could not personally take responsibility for accepting or rejecting it. On July 30, the League Working Committee at its Lahore session gave Jinnah full authority to negotiate with Gandhi although Jinnah himself took the view that the proposals for a settlement, as indicated by Rajaji formula, were unsatisfactory:

"Let Mr. Gandhi join hands with the Muslim League on the basis of Pakistan in plain, unequivocal language, and we shall be nearer the independence of the people of India. Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Rajagopalachari are putting the cart before the horse, when they say that all these clauses can have any value or can become effective only if Great Britain transfers power to India. There is no chance of it, unless Hindus and Muslims come to a settlement and unite, and thus, by means of a united front, wring out our freedom from the unwilling hands of the rulers of Britain.

"But at last—and it is good and conductive to further progress—Mr. Gandhi has, at any rate in his personal capacity, accepted the principle of partition or division of India. What remains now is the question of how and when this has got to be carried out. I hope that I have made it clear that the procedure and method adopted are hardly conductive to friendly negotiations and the form is pure dictation, as it is not open to any modification. As regards the merits of the proposals, Mr. Gandhi is offering a shadow and a husk, a maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten Pakistan."

In conclusion, Jinnah stated that he had received a letter from Gandhi dated Panchgani July 17 and he had already replied to him on July 24 from Srinagar. He then read out the English version of Gandhi's letter written in Gujarati:

"Brother Jinnah—There was a time when I was able to induce you to speak in the mother tongue. Today, I venture to write to you in the mother tongue. I have already suggested a meeting between you and me in my invitation issued from jail. I have not yet written to you since my release. Today I am impelled to do so. Let us meet whenever you wish. Do not regard me as an enemy of Islam or of Indian Muslims. I have always been a servant and friend to you and to mankind. Do not disappoint me."

Jinnah then read out his own reply:

"Dear Mr. Gandhi—I shall be glad to receive you at my house in Bombay on my return, which will probably be about the middle of August. By that time, I hope that you will have recuperated your health fully and will be returning to Bombay. I would like to say nothing more till we meet."

Gandhi's preparedness to discuss partition of India with Jinnah created bewilderment and aroused bitter criticism. The Hindus in the Punjab and Bengal were particularly alarmed at the prospect

of being the members of a minority in Pakistan, while the attitude of some Congressmen was that of reluctant acquiescence. Even some of the Working Committee members detained in the Ahmednagar Fort were resentful of Gandhi's new move. One complaint in particular made by some leaders was that this offer of Pakistan at this particular juncture had come as a godsend to Jinnah. The League ministries in Bengal, the North-West Frontier Province and Sind were all in a precarious position, and the Punjab was divided in its attitude. The critics asserted that Gandhi had rescued Jinnah and further entrenched his position.

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Gandhi pleaded and argued. "The publication of the formula," he said at Panchgani on July 30, "is in pursuance of negotiations for a communal settlement. It is not an idle effort. It is conceived in all sincerity. It is unfortunate that the criticism that is levelled against it, so far as I can see, has been conceived out of prejudice or careless study of the formula. Nor is it an offer on the part of any party. It is a contribution from two life servants of the nation towards the solution of the communal tangle, which has hitherto defied solution. The Rajaji formula is intended as a help to the lovers of the country. It is the best we could conceive, but it is open to amendment, as it is open to rejection or acceptance."

A journalist who asked some pertinent questions received the following replies from Gandhi:

Question: "You said in Panchgani: 'All my recent declarations are quite consistent with all my previous declarations on the communal problem.' But in the past you had stated: 'Partition means a patent untruth . . . My whole soul rebels against that idea . . . to assent to such a doctrine is for me denial of God.' 'The partition proposal has altered the face of the Hindu-Muslim problem. I have called it an untruth. There can be no compromise with it. It cannot come by honourable agreement.' 'I consider vivisection of India to be a sin.' "

marched against pure brute strength which is being used for the exploitation of China and the weaker states of Europe.

"Finally, I would say to my critics to enter with me into the sufferings, not only of the people of India, but of those whether engaged in the war or not, of the whole world. I cannot look at this butchery going on in the world with indifference. I have an unchangeable faith that it is beneath the dignity of men to resort to mutual slaughter. I have no doubt that there is a way out. I am vain enough to think that my malaria was godsend, and He used Government as His instrument for discharging me.

"I should be never reconciled to myself if, for fear of the hostile criticism or wrath of impatient Congressmen or even possible displeasure of members of the Working Committee, I did not express personal opinion, the acceptance of which I hold must result in bringing peace to the world, even out of the present turmoil."

On July 15, Gandhi wrote the following letter to Lord Wavell:

"You have no doubt seen the authentic copies now published in the Indian press of the statements given by me to Mr. Gelder of *News Chronicle*. As I have told the press, they were meant primarily to be shown to you. But Mr. Gelder, no doubt, with the best of motives gave the interview premature publicity. I am sorry. The publication will nevertheless be a blessing in disguise, if the interview enables you to grant at least one of my requests contained in my letter of June 17, 1944."

The Viceroy replied: "I have seen the statements you made to Mr. Gelder, and your subsequent explanation of them. But I do not think I can usefully comment at present except to repeat what I said in my first letter that if you will submit to me a definite and constructive policy, I shall be glad to consider it."

On July 27, Gandhi wrote again to Lord Wavell:

"I am prepared to advise the Working Committee to declare that, in view of the changed conditions, mass civil disobedience envisaged by the resolution of August 1942, cannot be offered and that full co-operation in the war effort should be given by the Congress, if a declaration of immediate Indian independence is made and a national government responsible to the Central Assembly be formed subject to the proviso that during the pendency of war, the military operations should continue as at present, but without involving any financial burden on India. If there is a desire on

the part of the British Government for a settlement, friendly talks should take the place of correspondence. But I am in your hands. I shall continue to knock, so long as there is the least hope of an honourable settlement.

"After the foregoing was written, I saw Lord Munster's speech in the House of Lords. The summary given by him in the House of Lords fairly represents my proposal. This summary may serve as a basis for mutual friendly discussion."

The Viceroy replied:

"His Majesty's Government remain most anxious that a settlement of Indian problem should be reached. But proposals such as those put forward by you are quite unacceptable to His Majesty's Government as a basis for discussion and you must realize this if you have read Mr. Amery's statement in the House of Commons on July 28 last. They are, indeed, very similar to the proposals made by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to Sir Stafford Cripps in April 1942 and His Majesty's Government's reasons for rejecting them are the same as they were then.

"Without recapitulating all these reasons in detail, I should remind you that His Majesty's Government at that time made this clear: (a) That their offer of unqualified freedom after the cessation of hostilities was made conditional upon the framing of a constitution agreed by the main elements of India's national life and the negotiation of the necessary treaty arrangements with His Majesty's Government; (b) That it is impossible during the period of hostilities to bring about any change in the constitution, by which means alone a national government, such as you suggest, could be made responsible to the Central Assembly.

"The object of these conditions was to ensure the fulfilment of their duty to safeguard the interests of the radical and the religious minorities and of the Depressed Classes, and their treaty obligations to the Indian states.

"It was upon the above conditions that His Majesty's Government invited Indian leaders to take part in an interim government which would operate under the existing constitution. I must make it quite clear that until the war is over, responsibility for defence and military operations cannot be divided from the other responsibilities of the Government, and that until hostilities cease and the new constitution is in operation, His Majesty's Government and

the Governor-General must retain their responsibility over the entire field. So far as the question of India's share of the cost of the war is concerned, this is essentially a matter for settlement between His Majesty's Government on the one hand and the Government of India on the other, and existing financial arrangements can only be reported at the instance of one or the other.

"It is clear, in these circumstances, that no purpose would be served by discussion on the basis which you suggest. If, however, the leaders of the Hindus, Muslims and important minorities were willing to co-operate in a transitional government established and working within the present constitution, I believe good progress might be made. But for such a transitional government to succeed, there must, before it is formed, be agreement in principle between Hindus and Muslims and all important elements as to the method by which the new constitution should be framed. This agreement is a matter for Indians themselves. Until the Indian leaders have come closer together than they are now, I doubt if I myself can do anything to help. Let me remind you that the minority problems are not easy. They are real and can be solved only by mutual compromise and tolerance.

"The period after the termination of the hostilities for which the transitional government would last would depend on the speed with which the new constitution could be framed. I see no reason why the preliminary work on that constitution should not begin as soon as the Indian leaders are prepared to co-operate to that end. If they can arrive at a genuine agreement as to the method of framing the constitution, no unnecessary time need be spent after the war in reaching final conclusions and in agreeing on the treaty arrangements with His Majesty's Government. There again, the primary responsibility rests on the Indian leaders."

Commenting on the Viceroy's reply, Gandhi stated: "The Viceroy's proposition means that unless all the main parties agree as to the constitution of the future, and there is an agreement between the British Government and all the main parties, there is to be no change in the constitutional position, and the Government of India as at present is to be carried on. The names of parties given in the Government reply are illustrations only. I have no doubt that on due occasions, more will be exhibited as from a conjurer's bag, and who knows how and when the British Government will

agree to surrender control. It is as clear as crystal that the British Government do not propose to give up the power they possess over the 400 millions, unless the latter develops strength enough to wrest it from them. I shall never lose hope that India will do so by purely moral means."

In an interview on the debate on India in Parliament, late in July, Gandhi said:

"It has caused me pain and amazement that the representatives of the British nation, who have a long and distinguished record of heroic fight for political freedom, should divorce the economic development of India from political subjection and give the former preference over the latter. To me it looks like putting the cart before the horse, and I have not yet seen any horse performing the trick of pushing the cart with its nose. It was, therefore, a pleasure to find two noted industrialists, Mr. J. R. D. Tata and Sir Homi Modi, summarily rejecting the idea put forth in the House of Commons and holding out, I suppose, from bitter experience, that the economic development of India was dependent upon the solution of the political deadlock, in other words a proper national government functioning at the centre. I suppose they had in mind the gigantic concessions that have been made during recent years to the British monopolists. They must have had in mind also the strangling of the Indian enterprise. What can be, therefore, happen without a national government is not the economic development of India, but its exploitation.

"I hold that in spite of all the honesty that the British rulers can summon to their assistance, it is impossible for them to get behind Indian skin and know the real disease. The consensus of opinion in the House of Commons, therefore, is for me a terrible pointer. It confirms me, in my opinion, that the 'Quit India' resolution was no hasty cry, conceived in anger. To put the same in the parliamentary language, it demands that India must be now governed by Indians chosen by her own people, not a coterie but the whole mass of people without distinction of race or creed or colour. It is unfortunate that the House of Commons has once more missed the opportunity of making the issue between the allied powers and the Axis powers a real issue of democracy versus autocracy, or the exploitation of the classes or nations by a class or a nation armed to the teeth. My offer presented that issue in the clearest possible

language that I could command. It was presented on behalf of all the exploited nations and races of the earth. It is a great pity that the Lords and the Commons turned down my offer. The allies will have their victory, but the exploited races will not feel the glow of it. They will know that the seeds of another and deadlier war will be sown by that very victor. I ask myself the question, 'Must rivers of blood flow for such an empty victory?' "

Gandhi told the communists some home truth about their stand with regard to the war which they called the "people's war". In a letter to Mr. P. C. Joshi, he wrote: "I understand that although the chief actors among the allied powers are by no means inclined towards real democracy, you think that by the time the war ends their designs will be confounded and that the people all the world over will suddenly find self-expression and overthrow the present leaders. In the peoples, I am entitled to include us, other Asiatics and Negroes, for that matter perhaps also the proletariat of Japan and Germany. If such is your belief, I must confess that I do not share it, but I keep myself open to conviction. Meanwhile, I suggest that the title 'people's war' is highly misleading. It enables the Government in India to claim that at least one popular party considers this as the people's war. I suggest too that Russia's limited alliance with the allied powers cannot by any stretch of imagination convert what was before an imperialistic war against the Nazi combine into a people's war." He concluded:

"Holding the view I do, it is superfluous for me now to answer your argument that 'this war has split the world into two camps'. Between Scylla and Charybdis, if I sail in either direction, I suffer shipwreck. Therefore, I have to be in the midst of the storm. I suggested a way out. Naturally, it has been rejected, because the powers that be do not want to relax their grip on India."

Gandhi-Jinnah Talks

1944

Gandhi appealed to all fair-minded people to break what he called "the diabolical conspiracy to stifle India's aspirations". The British Government's rejection of his offer, Gandhi said, did not affect in any way his efforts to come to terms with Jinnah. "A proper heart-to-heart agreement between us," said Gandhi, "can induce revision even of the firm refusal of the British Government as conveyed through His Excellency's letter."

Coincident with Gandhi-Gelder interview were certain negotiations that Rajagopalachari had been carrying on with Jinnah. On July 10, 1944, Rajagopalachari published a formula which had been discussed with and had been approved by Gandhi during his fast in 1943 and which he had communicated to Jinnah in April 1944. The formula was intended to serve as a basis for a settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League. Its provisions were: (1) The Muslim League was to endorse the demand for independence for the transitional period. (2) At the end of the war, a commission would demarcate those contiguous areas in North-West and North-East India in which the Muslims were in an absolute majority, and in those areas a plebiscite of all the inhabitants would decide whether or not they should be separated from Hindustan. (3) In the event of separation, agreements would be made for defence, commerce, communications and other essential purposes. (4) The terms should be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the governance of India.

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"Let Mr. Gandhi join hands with the Muslim League on the basis of Pakistan in plain, unequivocal language, and we shall be nearer the independence of the people of India. Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Rajagopalachari are putting the cart before the horse, when they say that all these clauses can have any value or can become effective only if Great Britain transfers power to India. There is no chance of it, unless Hindus and Muslims come to a settlement and unite, and thus, by means of a united front, wring out our freedom from the unwilling hands of the rulers of Britain.

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Answer: "Though I would avoid answering all questions on the subject before the forthcoming meeting between the Qaid-e-Azam and me, I must not postpone answering yours. I know my present attitude has puzzled and pained many people. I have not revised the opinion quoted by you. At the same time that I made the statement you refer to, I was also a party to the self-determination resolution of the A.-I.C.C. I hold that the Rajaji formula gives effect to that resolution. I would, however, urge the critics not to mind my inconsistencies, socalled or real. Let them examine the question on merits and bless the effort if they can."

Question: "What is your reaction to Mr. Jinnah's speech? If he does not accept your proposal or your talks with him end in failure, will you withdraw your support to Rajaji's proposals or will the proposals stand?"

Answer: "I do not believe in dying before my death. I do not approach the forthcoming visit with the expectation of failure. I always hope for the best and prepare for the worst. I would, therefore, ask you not to anticipate the failure. Ask me when the failure stares you and me in the face."

On August 1, Gandhi arrived in Poona. Large crowd of villagers lined the route from the foot of the *ghats* to Poona. Before leaving for Wardha on the 2nd, he visited the *samadhis* of Kasturba and Mahadev and offered prayers and flowers. Over 6,000 persons received Gandhi at the Wardha station on August 3. On his way to Sevagram, Gandhi walked to the spot where a humble villager had died as a result of firing during August '42.

On August 9, 1944 fell the second anniversary of "Quit India" movement. On August 5, Gandhi issued the following statement:

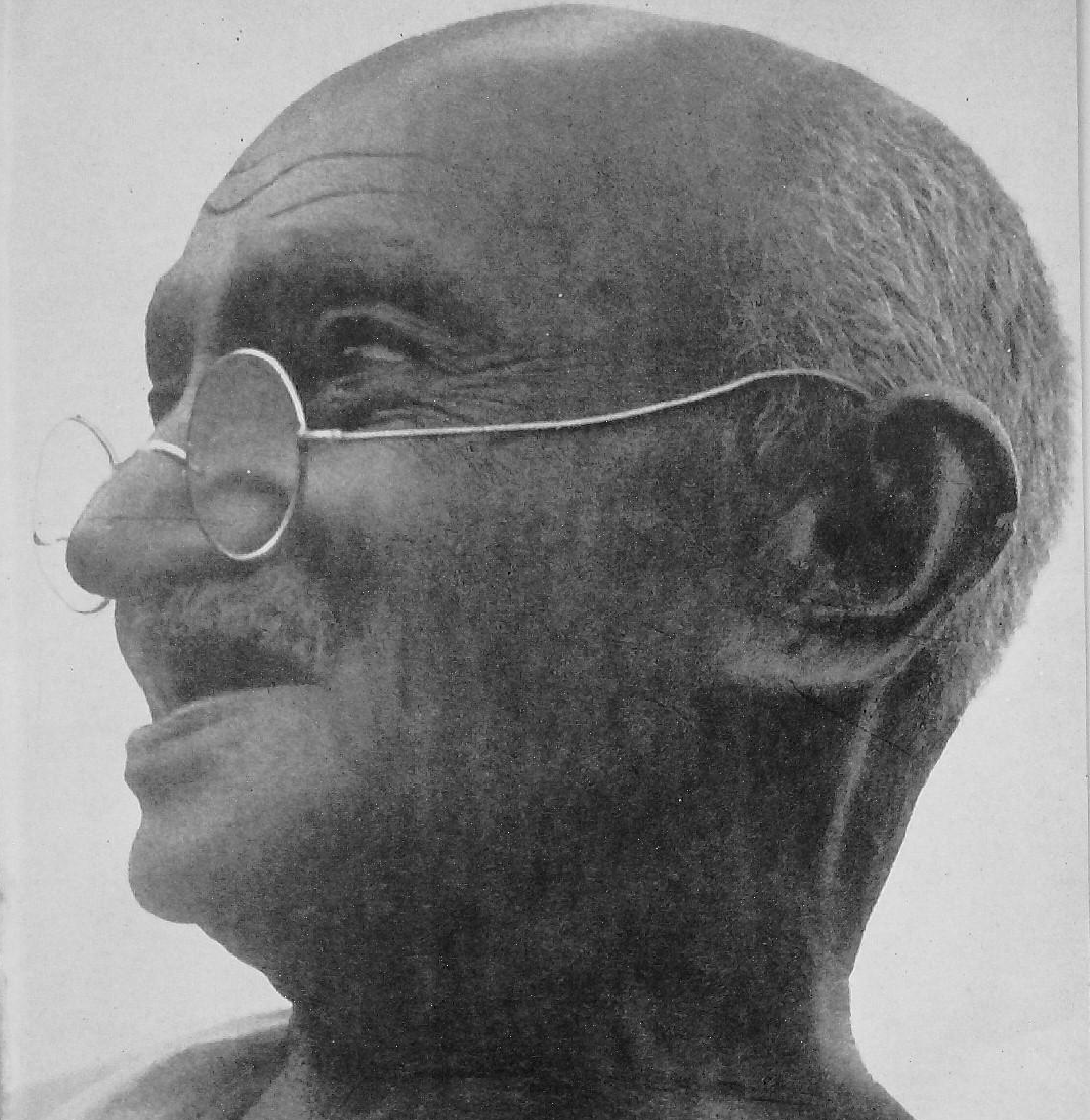
"Many Congressmen ask me how to celebrate the forthcoming August 9. That date was a turning-point in India's fight for freedom. I had intended to spend August 9th, 1942 in peaceful introspection and to inaugurate the negotiations for a settlement. But the Government or fate had decided otherwise. The Government went mad, and so did some people. Sabotage and the like were resorted to and many things were done in the Congress name or in my name. I am quite aware that I do not represent the Congress mind always. Many Congressmen repudiate my non-violence. The Working Committee is the only body which can legitimately and truly represent the Congress.

"As an old servant of the country, however, I can advise, and the Congressmen are at liberty to treat my advice as instructions. I have already said that mass civil disobedience cannot be offered now; but mass civil disobedience is one thing and individual action in the sense of self-respect and liberty is wholly another. It is a universal duty for all time, the discharge of which requires no sanction, save that of one's own conscience.

"But the forthcoming 9th is a special occasion. There has arisen much misunderstanding about the Congress purpose and mine. I must avoid all avoidable risks. Therefore, in all places, except in Bombay, my advice is not to disregard special police prohibitions for that day. For Bombay, I have already given advice through the Mayor of Bombay. I need not reiterate the advice here. I have selected Bombay as the most suitable place for the simple reason that it is most easily accessible to me and is the place where the historic meeting of August '42 was held.

"And whatever it is to be, it will be a symbolic act. Curiosity is natural and pardonable, but I plead for restraint; the self-imposed curb will be good for the country. My work will be finished, if I succeed in carrying conviction to the human family that every man or woman, however weak in body, is the guardian of his or her self-respect and liberty. This defence avails, though the whole world may be against the individual resister. I have suggested the present symbolic procedure to see whether those who organize the demonstration have co-operation from the local public. The freedom of four hundred million people through purely non-violent effect is not to be gained without learning the virtue of iron discipline, not imposed from without but sprung naturally from within. Without the requisite discipline, non-violence can only be a veneer.

"The second thing that I should like done on August 9th is for those who have gone underground to discover themselves. They can do so by informing the authorities of their movements and whereabouts, or by simply and naturally doing their work in the open without any attempt to evade or elude the police. To go underground is to elude the police. Therefore, real discovery is to discover oneself to the party eluded. Nothing should be done, unless conviction has gone home that a particular action is essential for the cause. In the absence of such a conviction, those who see this note may ignore it and follow what they consider best for the country.



Photograph : R. V. Pandit

Gandhi, July 1944

Photograph : R. V. Pandit

On his evening walk at Panchagani, July 1944

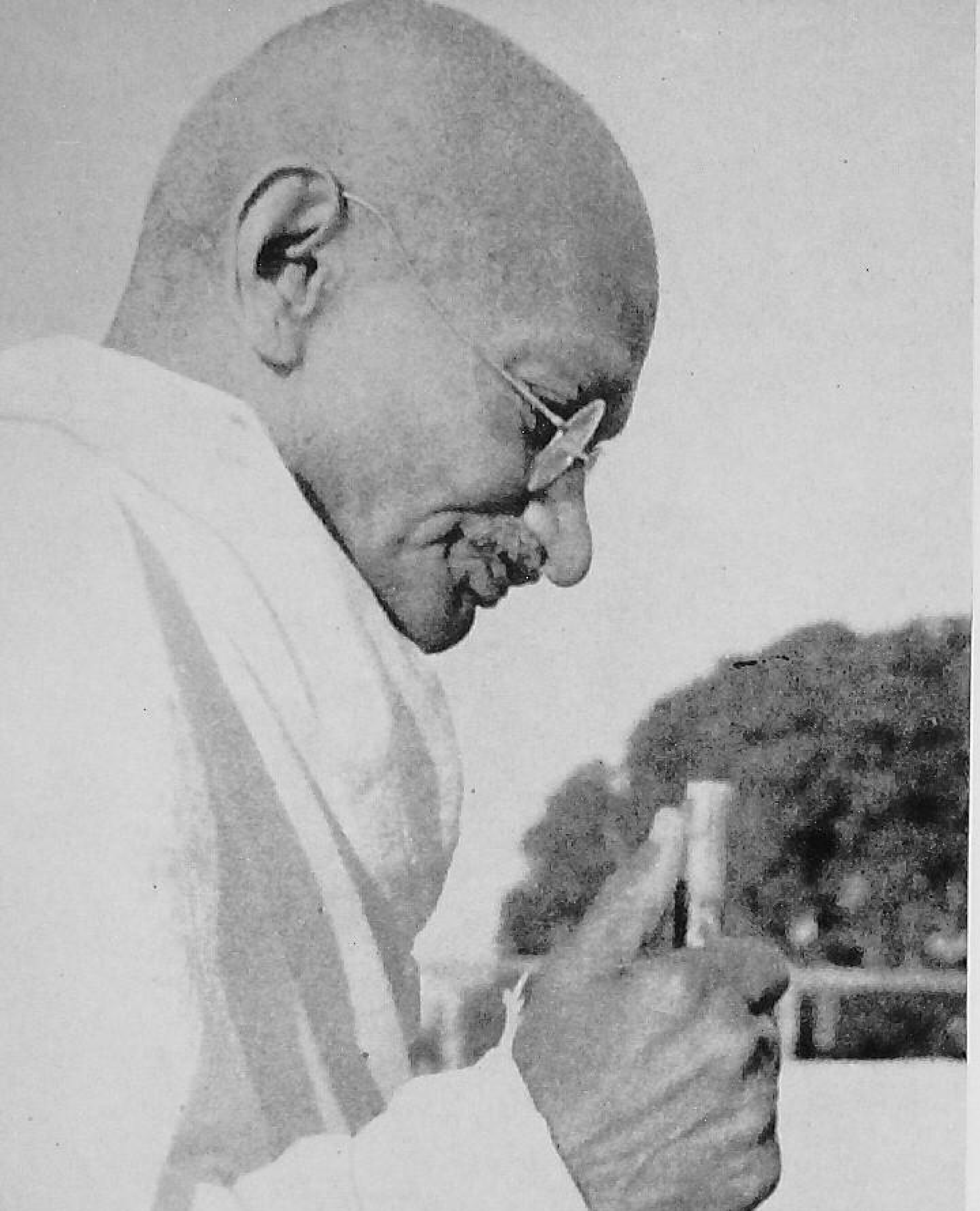
Photograph : R. V. Pandit

His silhouette, Panchagani, July 1944

On the way home,

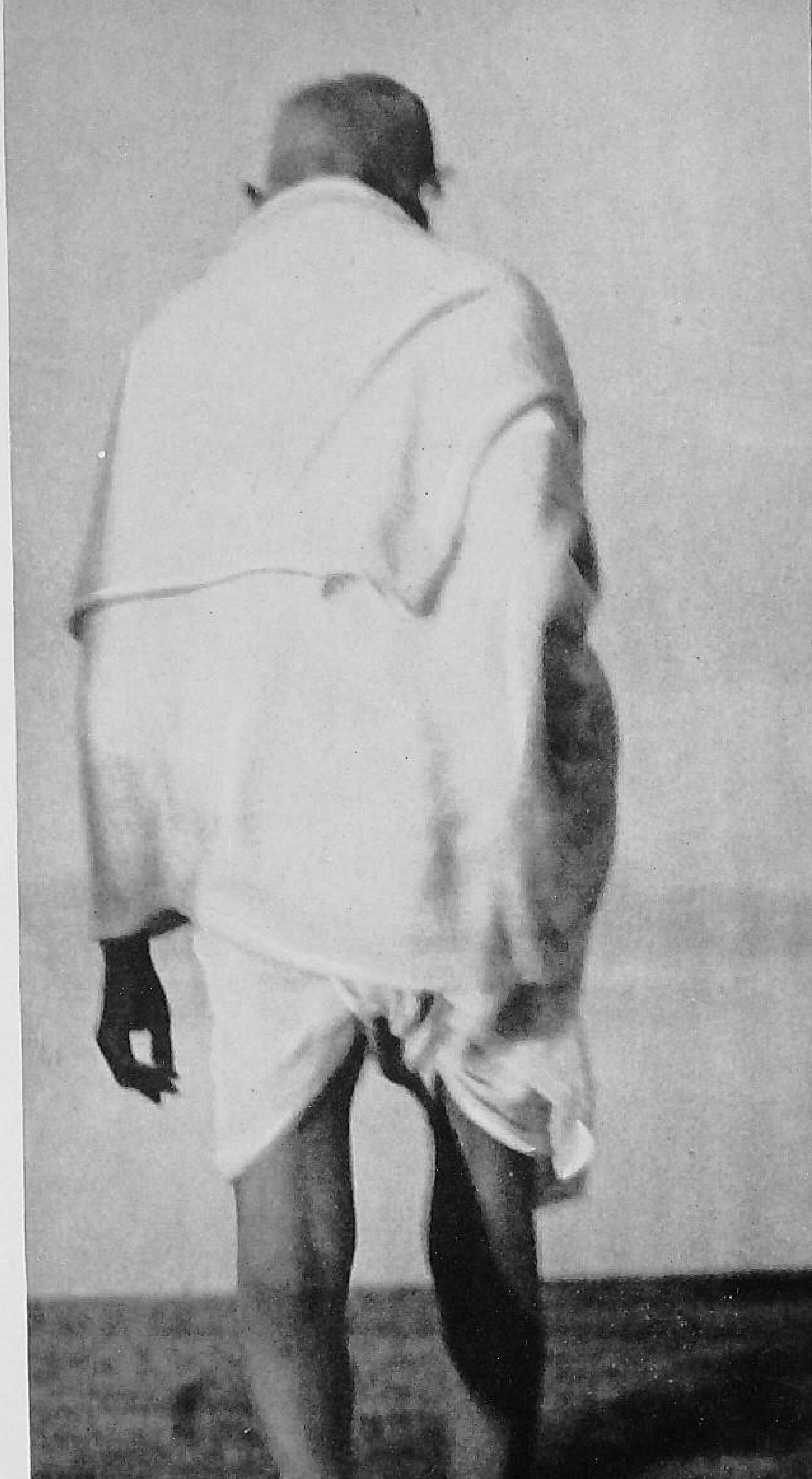
Photographs : R. V. Pandit

Panchagani, July 1944



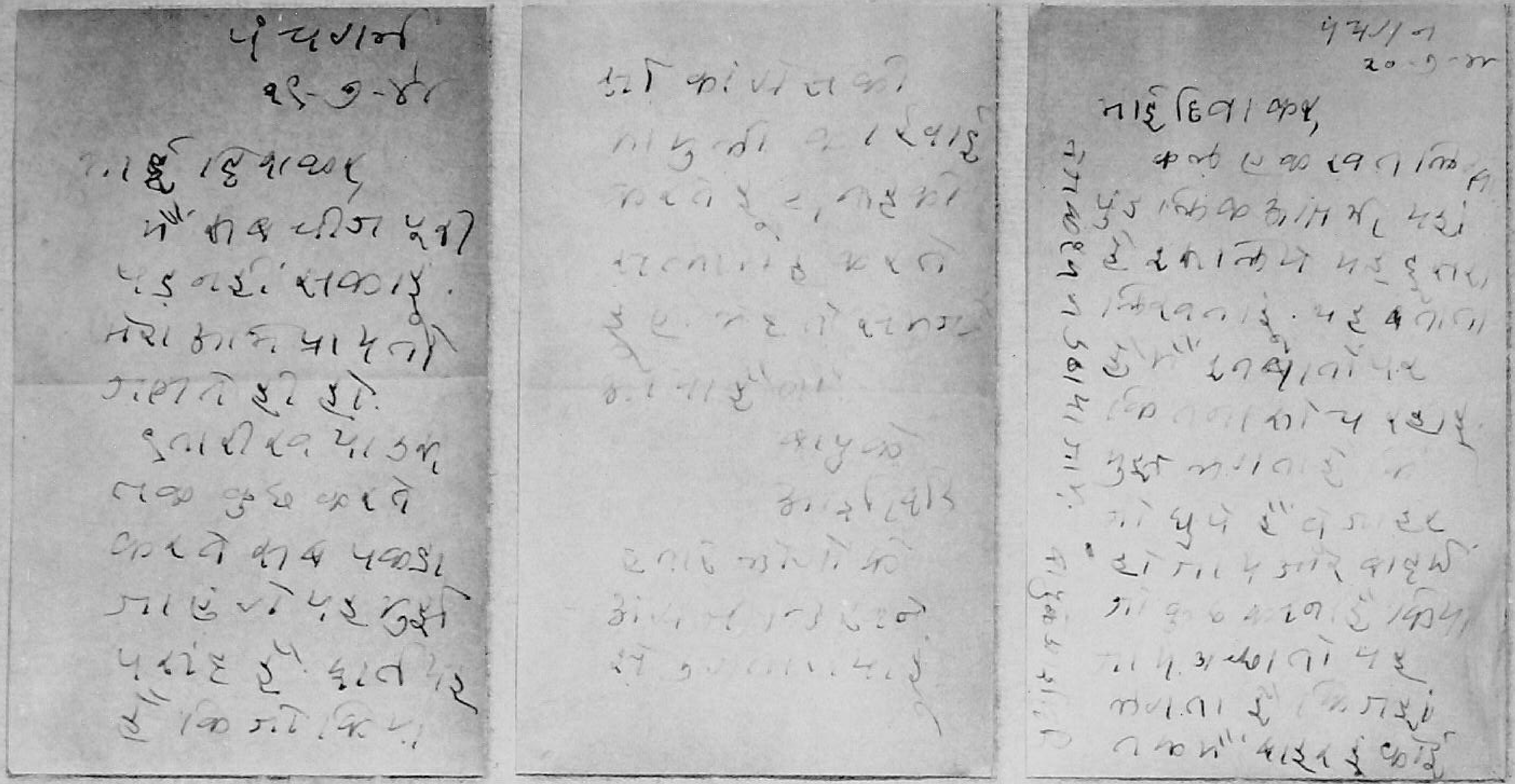
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

With his walking staff



Photograph : R. V. Pandit

His usual gait



Courtesy: R. R. Diwakar

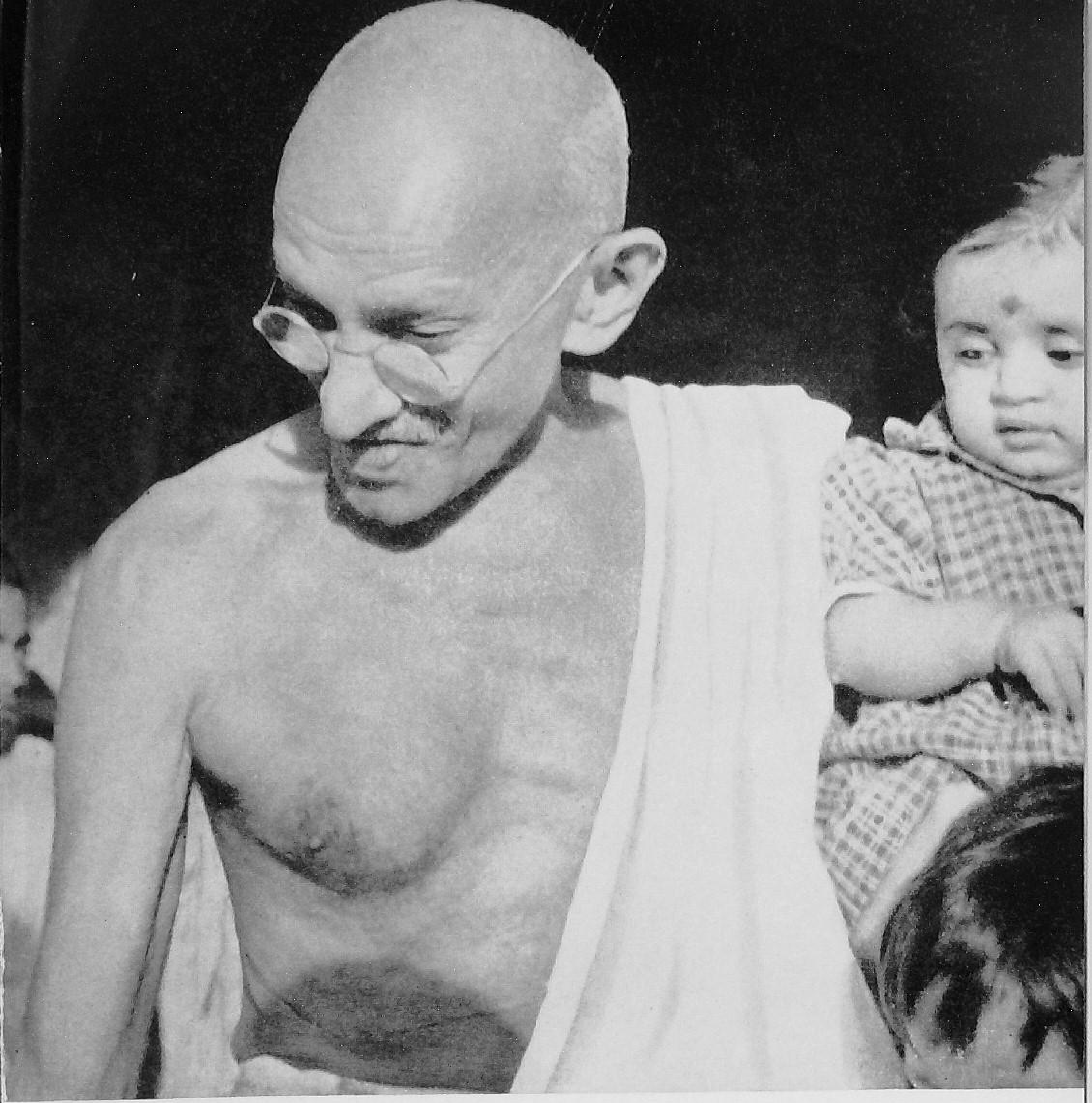
Gandhi's letters to R. R. Diwakar, dated Panchagani, July 1944

Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

On the way to Wardha, August 3, 1944

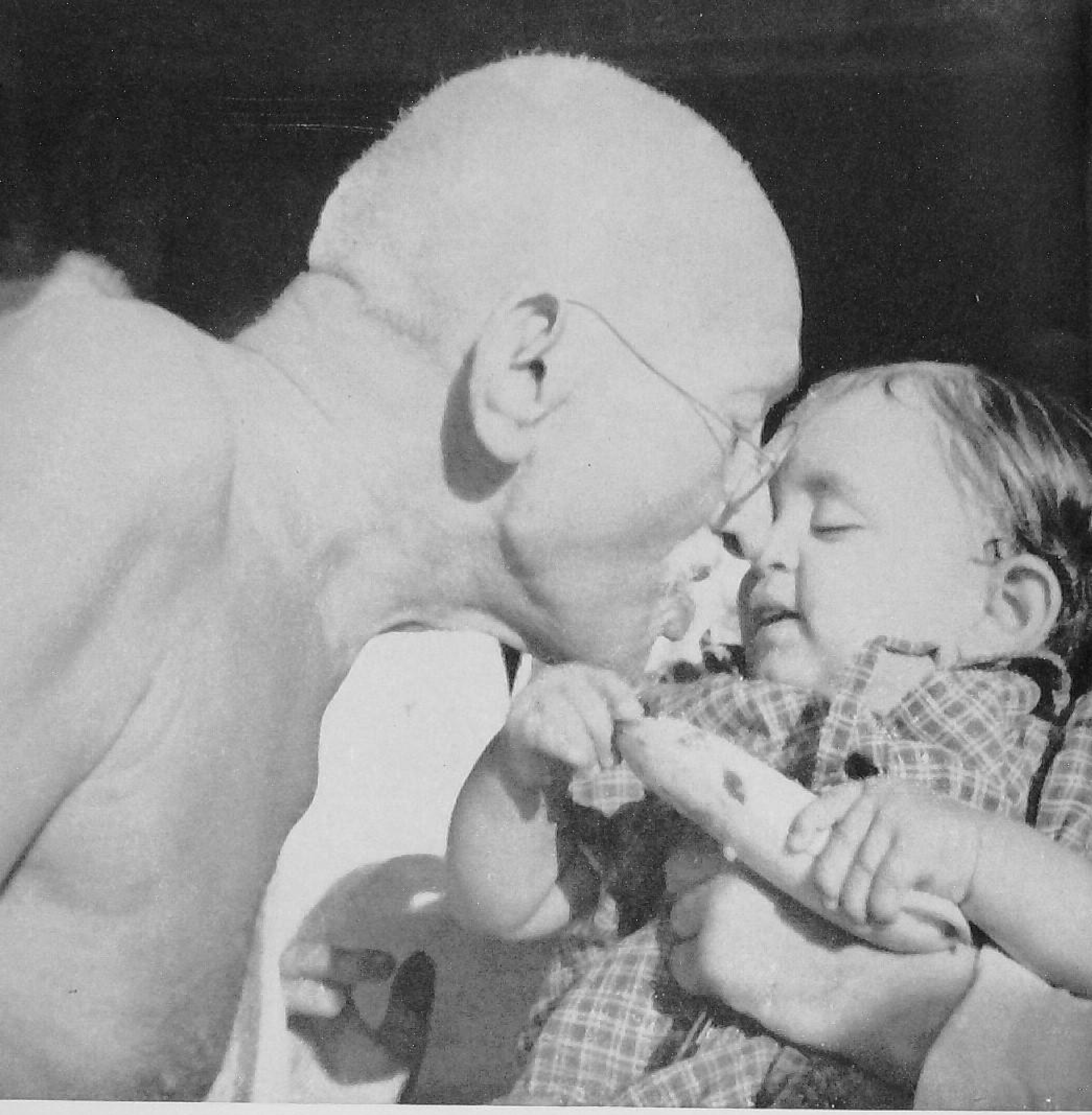
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi plants a *tulasi* plant, Sevagram, August 1944



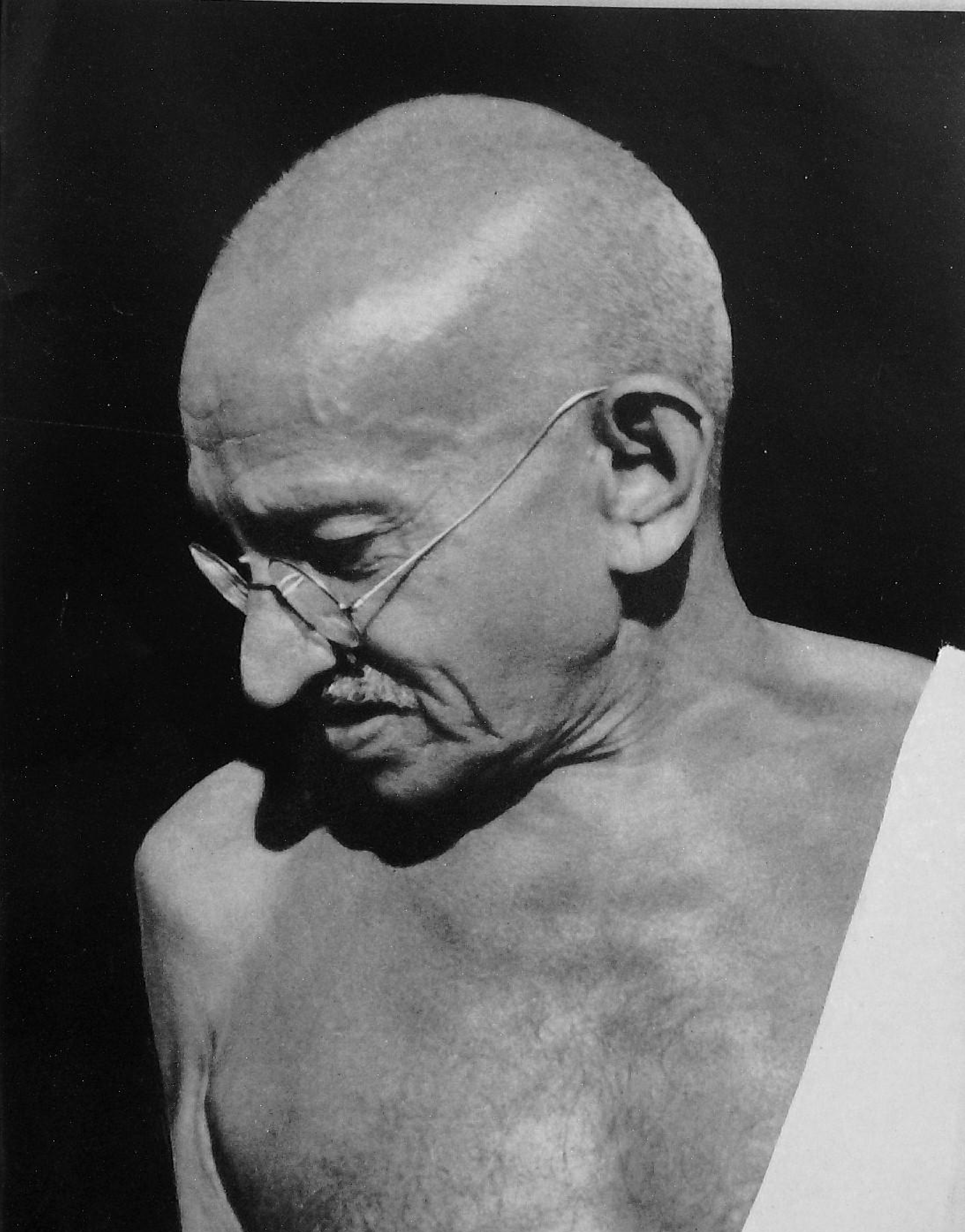
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Amongst the children at Sevagram, August 1944



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Playing with a child, Sevagram

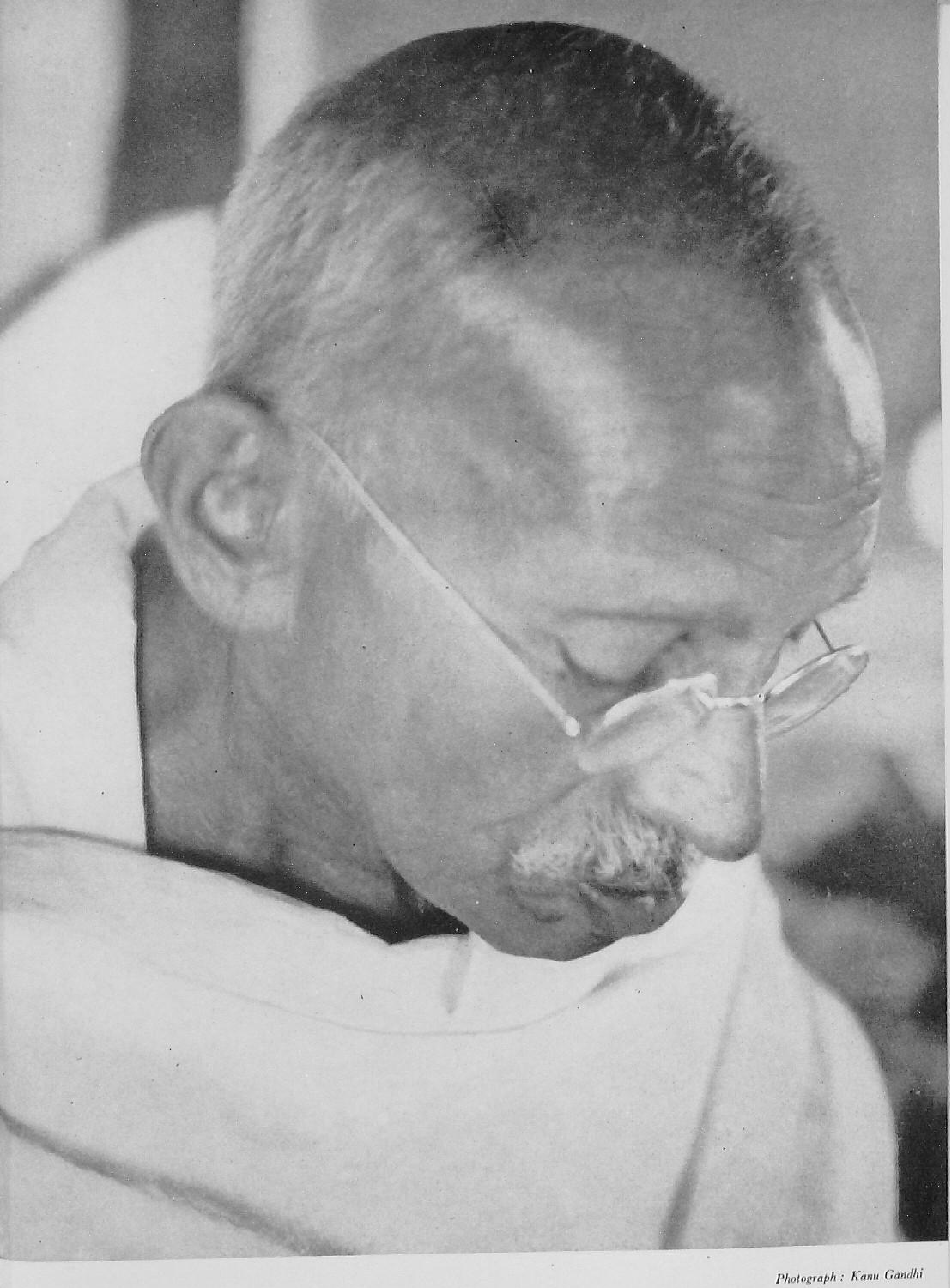


Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi at Sevagram, August 1944

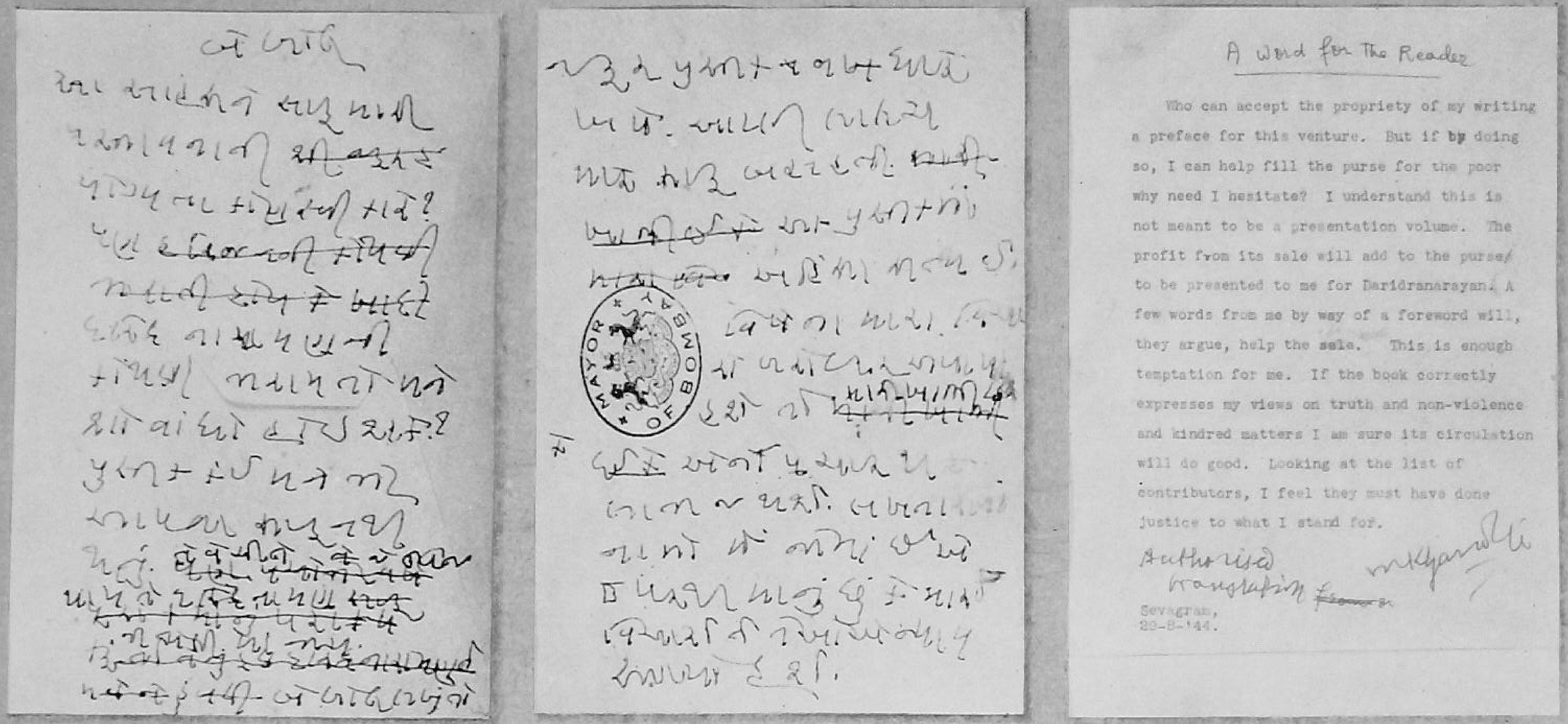
Photograph : Shewak

At a ceremonial function in Sevagram, August 1944



Photograph: Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi aged 74


A Word for The Reader

Who can accept the propriety of my writing a preface for this venture. But if by doing so, I can help fill the purse for the poor why need I hesitate? I understand this is not meant to be a presentation volume. The profit from its sale will add to the purse to be presented to me for Daridranarayan. A few words from me by way of a foreword will, they argue, help the sale. This is enough temptation for me. If the book correctly expresses my views on truth and non-violence and kindred matters I am sure its circulation will do good. Looking at the list of contributors, I feel they must have done justice to what I stand for.

Authorised translation ~~from~~

M. K. Gandhi

Sevagram,
29-8-'44.

A draft of a preface in Gujarati along with its English translation penned by Gandhi for the seventy-fifth birthday volume *Gandhiji* presented to him on October 2, 1944

"What everyone should do on the 9th, whether they have the conviction as to non-violence or not, or whether they are Congressmen or not, is to carry out on the 9th the whole or any part of the fourteen-fold programme reiterated in my recent note. Just for example, everyone should spin.

"Communities should find ways of giving expression to mutual understanding and brotherhood. Hindus and Muslims may organize joint programmes of prayers. God may bless the Qaid-e-Azam and me with wisdom to reach a common understanding in the interests of India. Hindus should visit Harijans and render them the service they may need. The spirit of service and helpfulness should pervade the atmosphere everywhere.

"I have experienced friendliness from Englishmen and Americans wherever I have met them, whether officials or laymen. I invite their co-operation especially on the 9th. Let them realize that the August Resolution was not conceived in hatred. It was an unvarnished statement of the natural right of the people of this land.

"To those who share my faith I would advise fasting and prayers on the auspicious day. This must not be a mechanical act. It must be done without ostentation for self-purification and penance. Its uplifting power is capable of being tested by every individual for himself. If the demonstration is carried out in the spirit in which I have conceived it, I have no doubt that it will lead to an early end of the misery of the masses."

Some underground workers discovered themselves to the police. According to Gandhi's instructions, twenty-five satyagrahis wrote to the Police Commissioner of Bombay that they would read the "Quit India" resolution at 5.30 a.m. on August 9. All of them were arrested and after twelve hours' detention they were released.

Congressmen and Muslim Leaguers prayed together for the success of the forthcoming Gandhi-Jinnah meeting. At Anand Bhawan, Allahabad, prominent Congressmen and Leaguers adopted a resolution for Hindu-Muslim unity. "This day is different from other days," observed Gandhi opening a non-stop mass spinning at Sevagram. "Today you pray that God may bless the Qaid-e-Azam and me with wisdom to reach a common understanding in the interest of India."

"Give your blessings to me and Mahatma Gandhi," Jinnah observed at Lahore, "so that we might arrive at a settlement. The

third party is there and it will try. But we can come to a settlement in spite of them, knowing that Gandhiji is incorruptible and having that same faith in me." For the first time, Jinnah called Gandhi "Mahatma" in a public statement and he made a fervent appeal for political truce: "It has been the universal desire that we should meet. Now that we are going to meet, help us. We are coming to grips. Bury the past."

All this suggested a happy augury and the people waited eagerly for August 19. Their meeting, however, had to be postponed till September 9, owing to Jinnah's illness. Gandhi pleaded with the press and the people to create friendly atmosphere.

On August 15 fell the second anniversary of Mahadev Desai's death. Gandhi constantly remembered his devoted secretary. Some correspondents had administered a gentle rebuke: "You have become the president of Kasturba Memorial Fund Trust. May we ask what have you done for Mahadev?" In reply, Gandhi said:

"The contrast between the two is too striking to be missed. The one was ready to drop off like a fully ripe fruit. And the other had yet to ripen. Life still lay before Mahadev as ordinary standards go. He had aimed at living up to a hundred years. The amount of material that Mahadev had piled up in his voluminous notebooks called for years of patient labour to work up and he had hoped to do all that. In his trunk was found a memo of my talks taken down on the day previous to his final end. Probably, none beside myself can today make them out, and even I do not know to what use he would have put them. Mahadev was the living example of the wise, who live and work as if they were born to immortality and everlasting youth. But, if all our dreams could be realized, life would become a phantasmagoria, and there would be utter chaos on earth. God in His mercy, therefore, has ordained that His will alone shall prevail on earth. Mahadev, though an idealist and a dreamer, never allowed his feet to be taken off the firm earth. He, therefore, adorned everything that he attempted.

"To Mahadev's admirers, I can only offer this consolation, that he lost nothing by his association with me. His dreams rose above scholarship or learning. Riches had no attraction for him. God had blessed him with high intellect and versatile tastes, but what his soul thirsted for was the devotional spirit. Even before he came to me, he had assiduously sought and cultivated the company of the

devotees and men of God after his heart. One may say that it was in furtherance of this quest that Mahadev came to me and, not obtaining the full satisfaction even with me, (shall I say) he turned his back upon me in the fullness of youth, leaving behind him his weeping relations and friends, and set forth to seek realization of his quest in the bosom of his Maker. The only fitting service that I can render his memory is to complete the work which he has left behind him unfinished, and to make myself worthy of his devotion, obviously a more difficult task than merely raising a fund for his memorial. It can be fulfilled only through divine grace. Mahadev's external goal was attainment of swaraj; the inner, to fully realize in his own person his ideal of devotion, and if possible to share the same with others.

"The raising of a material memorial is outside my scope. This is a task for Mahadev's friends and admirers to take up. Does a father ever initiate a memorial for his son? I was not responsible for the Kasturba Memorial. I have become the president of the committee only in order to ensure the use of the funds in accordance with its object. If the friends and admirers of Mahadev similarly set up a committee to raise a memorial fund and invite me to become its president and give guidance for its proper use, I shall gladly accept it. A word to the litterateurs. He took delight in spinning for hours. It was a daily duty. He would encroach upon his sleeping hours to finish his daily minimum of spinning. Why this insistence? Not, I assure them, to please me. He threw in his lot with me after much deliberation. I never knew him do a thing without conviction. He thought with me that the material salvation of India's teeming but famishing millions was bound up with the charkha. He discovered too that this daily labour with the hand enriched whatever literary work he did. It gave it a reality which it lacked otherwise. The raising of the funds is good and necessary. But a sincere imitation of Mahadev's constructive work is better. The monetary contribution to a memorial fund ought not to be a substitute for the more solid appreciation."

In the first week of September, trustees of the All-India Spinners' Association conferred at Sevagram. Gandhi addressing them remarked that the knowledge that the Government could crush the Charkha Sangh, if it wanted to, had affected him deeply. He did not wish to exist at the mercy of the Government. Mercy he would

have none except God's. Under the circumstances, would it not be better that he should break up the Charkha Sangh himself and distribute the property of the Charkha Sangh among the villagers? If it had penetrated every home in the 700,000 villages of India, who could crush it? The Government could not imprison forty crores of men and women, nor could they shoot down all of them. Even if one crore out of the forty crores were shot dead that would not retard, but on the contrary would hasten the attainment of their goal. He had told them often enough that they should forget politics and concentrate on the spinning wheel with all its implications. That and that alone he considered to be true politics, *satvic* politics. Every village that assimilated the message of the wheel would begin to feel the glow of independence. If the Charkha Sangh was to fulfil his expectations, its members should be the living examples of non-violence. Their whole life should be a demonstration of ahimsa in action and they should have healthy bodies and healthy minds. If they had been what they should be, the villagers would have taken to the charkha most enthusiastically. The problems of communal disharmony and of untouchability, etc., would have vanished like dew before the morning sun. It was in order to enable the Charkha Sangh to attain what it had failed to attain so far that he had suggested breaking it up into its component parts. He would suggest distributing the money that the Charkha Sangh possessed among the able workers who should go to the villages with the determination of devoting their lives to the spread of the wheel. Today Charkha Sangh was a highly centralized institution. Tomorrow, it would become completely decentralized. All the workers who go to villages would run their independent centres. The central office would inspect their work and give them necessary guidance, so that the principles for which the Charkha Sangh stood did not suffer neglect. A joint board of the Charkha Sangh, Gram Udyog Sangh and Talimi Sangh should be formed and it should issue the necessary directions from time to time for giving effect to the new policy. They should consider themselves jointly responsible for the full evolution of non-violence. Its full evolution would mean complete independence. The independence which could bring relief and happiness to the lowliest and the lost could only come through non-violence, that is to say through the wheel. Therefore, if they could make the Charkha Sangh serve that purpose, they would have all his co-operation. If

not, they could continue as a mere philanthropic organization, but that would not be enough for him. In that case, they must leave him to plough his lonely furrow.

"The constructive worker," he said, "must have a wide knowledge and broad vision to be able to give some guidance, even in the sphere of all-India politics. Today, we think that our activities can get strength only if Rajaji, that is the Congress ministry, returns to power. If this is the situation, it is far from satisfactory. Why should we look to the Viceroy's palace for finding a solution of the present political deadlock? If we begin to do our work with confidence and faith, the Viceroy shall have to come to us. Our work shall be such that the Viceroy will realize that it is impossible for him to rule over us. He will realize that it is impossible to keep us in bondage anymore. When 700,000 of our villages will begin work with this faith and energy, our slavery will disappear of its own accord. Every village shall have become self-reliant and free. This is the real swaraj and this alone will bring true democracy."

On September 8, when Gandhi left for Bombay, Mr. Thattee, an organizer of anti-Pakistan front, and eight others were arrested for indulging in demonstrations. One of them was found to be in possession of a dagger. On the 9th, Gandhi reached Bombay. Since early morning, entire Malabar Hill area was protected by police.

Within two hours of his arrival, he went to Jinnah's residence at five minutes to four, accompanied by Pyarelal, his secretary. At the door of the house, Jinnah received Gandhi, who put his arm round his host's shoulder gripping it affectionately. Jinnah then requested Gandhi to satisfy the waiting cameramen.

For full three hours, they were closeted in Jinnah's study. On that day the pressmen had the feeling that an agreement between the two was not impossible. No one attached any special importance to Gandhi's cryptic reply that he had brought "only flowers" from Jinnah's house, when asked, "Have you brought anything?" At the end of the meeting, Jinnah, on behalf of both of them, dictated the following statement: "We have had frank and friendly talks and we are resuming our talks on Monday at 5.30 p.m. Tomorrow is the 21st day of Ramzan and, therefore, all Musalmans have to observe it. And I have, therefore, requested Mr. Gandhi to oblige me not to have a meeting on the 21st day of Ramzan." Here Gandhi interrupted and said: "No obliging; willing to surrender."

On September 11, the two met again in the evening after Gandhi had completed his twenty-four-hour silence. Addressing the prayer meeting in the evening, Gandhi observed that all he could say at the present stage was that Jinnah and he had met as old friends on Saturday and again that day. Jinnah and he had only God between them as witness. "My constant prayer these days is that He may so guide my speech that not a word may escape my lips, so as to hurt the feelings of Jinnah Saheb or damage the cause that is dear to us both. I am certain the same is the case with Jinnah Saheb. Our goal is the attainment of independence for the whole of India. It is for that that we pray and are pledged to lay down our lives. We are fully alive to our responsibility and are straining every nerve to come to a settlement."

On September 12, at 10.30 a.m., Gandhi reached Jinnah's residence. Their talks lasted till one. Again the talks took place from 5.30 to 7. Gandhi's midday and evening meals were carried to him at Jinnah's residence. No statement was issued.

On September 13 their discussions continued for the fourth day from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 5.30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Gandhi had his long thin file and Jinnah a small thin book with a green cover. When Gandhi stepped out of the house, he told the press: "Yesterday you read something in our faces. Here we are both. I would like you not to read anything in our faces except hope and nothing but hope."

This behest seemed necessary to Gandhi, because some Bombay journalists had already begun reading meanings into the prolonged nature of the conversations and prophesying that the talks could not end in anything but utter failure. A local newspaper announced categorically that morning that the talks would fail. When such pessimistic forecasts were pointed out to the two leaders on the 13th, Jinnah treated them with indifference and stated, "Why bother?" Gandhi said: "You do not know they have written so much. Have you read the newspapers? You do not know what people bent on mischief will do."

Turning again to the journalists, Gandhi remarked: "All of you know both of us. You should leave both of us alone, or if you can read our hearts and our faces, you should submit what you write to one of us to enable us to say so if it were so. You should be silent if you want to serve India and humanity."

On September 14, they met in the evening for ninety minutes. The following day, the morning papers carried an interview given to the American press by Sir Stafford Cripps in which it was said: "A new constitution act for India is a difficult and complicated matter which cannot be undertaken in war time. Any temporary arrangement for participation by Indian parties in the Government must be under the existing constitution."

Outwardly everything was just the same on Friday, September 15. Gandhi arrived exactly at 5.30 p.m. and remained there till 7 p.m. Then the two came out. Jinnah wearing his wry smile, made a short statement to the press: "I want to tell you that I have received any number of telegrams and letters multiplying and increasing in thousands and I find it physically impossible to reply to all of them particularly as we are engaged in our talks here. I want to assure all those, who have sent me their good wishes, that I appreciate and thank them for it." Then he announced: "Tomorrow we are not going to meet, because it is a big day in the month of Ramzan and it is the day on which the Koran was revealed, a Revelation Day. Therefore, it is observed as a holiday. Thereafter, we continue to meet at the same time as before."

On Sunday, September 17th, they met again, after Gandhi had earlier in the day received Jinnah's letter, asking for a definition of provisional interim government. There was no meeting on Monday, as Gandhi was observing silence.

On September 19 was published Jinnah's Id message, which by its complete silence regarding the talks and its air of belligerence seemed to belie the hope of any reconciliation. "Let us resolve once again, on this auspicious day, to make any sacrifice, till we have achieved complete independence and successfully marched to our goal of Pakistan."

On account of Id, talks were postponed to 21st evening. Gandhi at the end of the evening prayer said that his earnest prayer to all present was that, if they had the good of their country at heart and wanted India to be free and independent at the earliest moment, they should establish the closest bonds of friendship between Hindus and Muslims and members of all other communities. Referring to his talks with Jinnah, he said that he was not at liberty to divulge their nature. He wanted them all to fraternize with one another on the Id day and pray that God may guide them aright.

On September 21, the negotiations were resumed and they continued till September 27, when Jinnah announced their termination after failing to reach an agreement. Jinnah added, "We trust that this is not the final end of our effort." While Gandhi commented: "The breakdown is only so called. It is an adjournment *sine die*." On September 27, the correspondence that had passed between Gandhi and Jinnah, in the course of these seventeen days of discussion, was made public. This consisted of twenty-four letters, many of them intricate and long.

The following statement was handed to the pressmen by Jinnah along with the text of the correspondence:

"Mr. Gandhi from the very commencement of our talks made it clear that he had approached me in his individual capacity and that he represented no one but himself. However, he assured me that he was really open to conviction and conversion to the Muslim League Lahore resolution of March 1940. Without prejudice to my objection, that in order to reach any settlement, negotiations can only be carried on properly when the other side is also fully represented and vested with authority, in deference to Mr. Gandhi's wishes, I agreed to the task of persuading and of converting him to the fundamentals of the Lahore resolution. I have placed before him everything and every aspect of the Muslim point of view in the course of our prolonged talks and correspondence, and we discussed all the pros and cons generally, and I regret to say that I have failed in my task of converting Mr. Gandhi.

"We have, therefore, decided to release to the press the correspondence that has passed between us. Nevertheless, we hope that the public will not feel embittered, and we trust that this is not the final end of our effort."

The early letters consisted mostly of efforts by Jinnah to obtain clarification of various points in the Rajaji formula. Gandhi claimed: "The Lahore resolution is indefinite. Rajaji has taken from it the substance and given it a shape." But Jinnah asked in what respect the resolution was indefinite and added "Rajaji not only put it out of shape but mutilated it."

Gandhi replied on September 15:

"For the moment, I have shunted the Rajaji formula, and with your assistance, am applying my mind very seriously to the famous Lahore resolution of the Muslim League.

"You must admit that the resolution itself makes no reference to the two nations theory. In the course of our discussions, you have passionately pleaded that India contains two nations, that is, the Hindus and Muslims, and that the latter have their homelands in India as the former have theirs.

"The more our argument progresses, the more alarming your picture appears to me. It would be alluring, if it were true. But my fear is growing that it is wholly unreal. I find no parallel in history for a body of converts and their descendants claiming to be a nation apart from the parent stock. If India was one nation before the advent of Islam, it must remain one in spite of the change of faith of a very large body of her children.

"You do not claim to be a separate nation by right of conquest but by reason of acceptance of Islam. Will the two nations become one, if the whole of India accepted Islam? Will the Bengalis, Oriyas, Andhras, Tamilians, Maharashtrians, and Gujaratis, etc., cease to have their special characteristics, if all of them became converts to Islam?

"These have all become one politically, because they are all subject to one foreign control. They are trying today to throw off that subjection.

"You seem to have introduced a new test of nationhood. If I accept it, I would have to subscribe to many more claims and face an insoluble problem.

"The only real though lawful test of our nationhood arises out of our common political subjection. If you and I throw off this subjection by our combined effort, we shall be born a politically free nation out of our travail. If by then we have not learnt to prize our freedom, we may quarrel among ourselves and, for want of a common master holding us together in his iron grip, seek to split up into small groups of nationalities. There will be nothing to prevent us from descending to that level, and we shall not have to go in search of a master. There are many claimants to the throne that never remains vacant.

"With this background, I shall present you with my difficulty in accepting your resolution:

"1. Pakistan is not in resolution. Does it bear the original meaning—the Punjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Sind and Baluchistan out of which the name was mnemonically formed? If not, what is it?

"2. Is the goal of Pakistan pan-Islam?

"3. What is it that distinguishes an Indian Muslim from other Indians, if not his religion? Is he different from a Turk or Arab?

"4. What is the connotation of the word 'Muslims' in the resolution under discussion? Does it mean the Muslims of the India of geography or of the Pakistan to be?

"5. Is the resolution addressed to Muslims by way of education, or to the inhabitants of the whole of India by way of appeal, or to the foreign ruler as an ultimatum?

"6. Are constituents in the two zones to constitute 'independent states', an undefined number in each zone?

"7. Is the demarcation to take place during the pendency of the British rule?

"8. If the answer to the last question is in the affirmative, the proposal must be accepted first by Great Britain and then imposed upon India, not evolved from within by the free will of the people of India ! ! !

"9. Have you examined the position and satisfied yourself that these 'independent states' will be materially and otherwise benefited by being split up into fragments?

"10. Please, satisfy me that these independent sovereign states will not become a collection of poor states, a menace to themselves and to the rest of India.

"11. Pray, show me by facts and figures or otherwise, how independence and welfare of India as a whole can be brought about by the acceptance of the resolution?

"12. How are Muslims under the princes to be disposed of as a result of this scheme?

"13. What is your definition of 'minorities'?

"14. Will you please define the 'adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards' for minorities referred to in the resolution?

"15. Do you not see that the Lahore resolution contains only a bare statement of the objective and does not give any idea as to the means to be adopted for the execution of the idea and the concrete corollaries thereof?

"For instance:

"(*a*) Are the people in the regions falling under the plan to have any voice in the matter of separation and, if so, how is it to be ascertained?

"(*b*) What is the provision for the defence and similar matters of common concern contemplated in the Lahore resolution?

"(*c*) There are many groups of Muslims who have continuously expressed dissent from the policy of the Muslim League. While I am prepared to accept the preponderating influence and position of the League and have approached you for that very reason, is it not our joint duty to remove their doubts and carry them with us by making them feel that they and their supporters have not been practically disfranchised?

"(*d*) Does this not lead again to placing the resolution of the Muslim League before the people of the zones concerned as a whole for acceptance?

"As I write this letter and imagine the working of the Lahore resolution in practice, I see nothing but ruin for the whole of India. Believe me, I approach you as a seeker. Though I represent nobody but myself, I aspire to represent all the inhabitants of India. For, I realize in my own person their misery and their degradation, which is their common lot, irrespective of class or caste or creed. I know that you have acquired a unique hold on the Muslim masses. I want you to use your influence for their total welfare, which must include the rest.

"In this hastily written letter I have only given an inkling of my difficulty."

Another letter written by Gandhi on the same day read thus:

"I have yours of September 14, received at 9.40 a.m. I woke up at 3 a.m. today to finish my letter on the Lahore resolution.

"Independence does mean as envisaged in the A.-I.C.C. resolution of 1942. But it cannot be on the basis of a united India. If we come to a settlement, it would be on the basis of that settlement, assuming of course that it secures general acceptance in the country. The process will be somewhat like this. We reach by joint effort independence for India as it stands. India, become free, will proceed to demarcation, plebiscite and partition, if the people concerned vote for partition. All this is implied in the Rajaji formula.

"As to the provisional interim government, I am afraid I cannot carry my answer any further than I have done. Though I have no scheme for such a government, if you have one in connection with the Lahore resolution, which also I presume requires an interim government, we can discuss it.

"The formula was framed by Rajaji in good faith. I accepted it in equal good faith. The hope was that you would look at it with favour. We still think it to be the best in the circumstances. You and I have to put flesh on it, if we can. I have explained the process we have to go through. You have no objection to it. Perhaps, you want to know how I would form the provisional government, if I was invited to form it. If I was in that unenviable position, I could see all the claimants and endeavour to satisfy them. My co-operation will be available in that task.

"I can give you the full satisfaction about your inquiry. What I would like to know would be: What will be the powers of such a provisional interim government, how will it be formed, to whom will it be responsible? The provisional interim government will be responsible to the elected members of the present assembly or to a newly elected one? It will have all the powers less that of the commander-in-chief during the war and full powers thereafter. It will be the authority to give effect to the agreement that may be arrived at between the Muslim League and the Congress and may be ratified by the other parties."

In reply, Jinnah wrote:

"It is quite clear that you represent nobody else but the Hindus, and as long as you don't realize your true position and the realities, it is very difficult for me to argue with you, and it becomes still more difficult to persuade you, and to hope to convert you to the realities and the actual conditions prevailing in India today. I am pleading before you in the hope of converting you, as I have done with many others successfully.

"As I have said before, you are a great man and you exercise enormous influence over the Hindus, particularly the masses, and by accepting the road that I am pointing out to you now, you are not prejudicing or harming the interests of the Hindus or of the minorities. On the contrary, Hindus will be the greatest gainers. I am convinced that the true welfare not only of the Muslims but of the rest of India lies in the division of India, as proposed by the Lahore resolution. It is for you to consider whether it is not your policy and your programme in which you have persisted, which has been the principal factor of the 'ruin of whole of India' and of the misery and the degradation of the people to which you refer and which I deplore no less than anyone else. And it is for that very

reason that I am pleading before you all these days, although you insist that you are having talks with me only in your own individual capacity, in the hope that you may yet revise your policy and programme."

Gandhi replied:

"Why can you not accept my statement that I aspire to represent all the sections that compose the people of India? Do you not aspire? Should not every Indian? That the aspiration may never be realized is beside the point.

"I am beholden to you, in spite of your opinion about me, for having patience with me. I hope you will never lose it, but will persevere in your effort to convert me. I ask you to take me with my strong views and even prejudices, if I am guilty of any.

"As to your verdict on my policy and my programme, we must agree to differ. For, I am wholly unrepentant. My purpose is, as a lover of communal unity, to place my services at your disposal."

On September 22, Gandhi wrote:

"I am unable to accept the proposition that the Muslims of India are a nation distinct from the rest of the inhabitants of India. I can be no willing party to a division which does not provide for the simultaneous safeguarding of common interests such as defence, foreign affairs and the like. We seem to be moving in a circle."

After disputing Gandhi's right to speak for the Congress with the same authority as he for his own part could speak for the League, Jinnah firmly rejected Rajaji's proposals. In the first place, Jinnah pointed out that Pakistan was not the bundle of contiguous areas offered him but the whole of the six provinces—Sind, the Punjab, the N.-W. Frontier, Baluchistan, Bengal and Assam—subject only to adjustments of their frontiers; secondly, that the non-Muslim inhabitants of those "Muslim homelands" were not entitled to voice in determining their fate; and thirdly—in reply to Gandhi's suggestion that, if Pakistan was decided upon, matters of common concern might be dealt with by a joint board of control—that there could be no matters of common concern to two separate sovereign states. And, if the kind of settlement proposed was thus quite unacceptable to Jinnah, so was the method and the timing for bringing it about. Jinnah had always made it plain that the "division" must precede the "quitting".

Jinnah insisted that Gandhi had rejected the fundamental principles of the Lahore resolution. He stated: "The August Resolution, so long as it stands, is a bar, for, it is fundamentally opposed to the Lahore resolution. The question of the division of India, as Pakistan and Hindustan, is only on your lips and it does not come from your heart." He pointed out that the Rajaji formula and also the terms suggested by Gandhi were "calculated to completely torpedo the Pakistan demand of Muslim India".

In the words of Gandhi, the talks and correspondence seemed to run "in parallel lines and never touch one another". At the end of the evening prayer, that took place immediately after his last interview with Jinnah on September 27, Gandhi addressed a large audience at length. Speaking in Gujarati, he said that he was not addressing them in Hindustani as before, because he wanted his words to go straight to the hearts of the audience most of whom were Gujaratis. He had particularly the women in mind, who were not accustomed to Hindustani speech.

He had told them that when the talks were over, he would let them know the result. That stage had been reached the day before but as the copies of the correspondence were not ready its actual release had to be postponed till that day. The authorized copies of the correspondence had now been sent to the press with a prefatory statement by the Qaid-e-Azam.

Hitherto he had said that he was not without hope with regard to the outcome of the talks. He had to confess that the result that he was hoping for had not materialized. But he had no sense of disappointment or despondency. For, he was convinced that even out of that breakdown good would result.

Although Jinnah Saheb and he had known each other fairly well in public life before, they had never come into such close personal contact. Their conversations were carried out with friendliness and cordiality. He wanted all communities to cultivate the same spirit of friendliness and of cordiality in their relations with one another. They should try to convert one another through it.

They might ask: Why was it then that the Qaid-e-Azam and he had failed to convert each other? His reply was that he had tried his level best to go as far as he could to meet the Qaid-e-Azam's viewpoint. He had taken incalculable pains to understand him and to make himself understood. But he had failed.

He had placed before the Qaid-e-Azam Rajaji's formula, but that did not commend itself to him. He had thereupon put forth another fresh proposal of his own in its place, but even that had failed to secure Jinnah Saheb's approval. In the same way, Jinnah Saheb's proposal had failed to commend itself to him. If either of them had been weak, then they would have possibly come to some sort of agreement, but, as responsible men, they could not afford to be weak. A helmsman had to be firm and unwavering, otherwise the ship would founder upon the rocks. Each one of them had tried to convince the other. It was possible that both of them might be in the wrong. But so long as each felt himself to be in the right, he could not let go his hold.

The news of the breakdown, he knew, would cause grief to the friends of India and might give cause for jubilation to the enemies. He drew their attention to the last sentence in their statement, in which he had said that it was not the final end of their effort.

Although they had been unable to appreciate each other's viewpoint, the public could help them to do so. They should not lose heart. If there was any one who had reason to feel disappointed, it was he. He had knocked at the Qaid-e-Azam's door. But, as he had already observed, there was no despondency in him. It was not for a votary of truth and non-violence to feel despondent, if his effort at times failed to yield the result aimed at. Failure should only serve as spur to further effort. God alone knew what was best for them. It was not for them to question God's ways. Therefore, instead of feeling despondent, they should regard the present breakdown as a challenge to their faith and as an incentive for even greater effort for establishing true unity among the various communities.

On September 28, Gandhi held a press conference attended by about forty Indian and foreign journalists. To them he first read out the following statement:

"It is a matter of deep regret that we two could not reach an agreement. But there is no cause for disappointment. The breakdown is only so called. It is an adjournment *sine die*. Each one of us must now talk to the public and put our viewpoints before them. If we do so dispassionately and if the public co-operate, then we may reach a solution of the seemingly insoluble at an early date. My experience of the precious three weeks confirms me in the view that the presence of the third power hinders the solution. A mind

enslaved cannot act as if it was free. I need not impute base motives to the rulers to prove what seems to me to be an axiomatic truth. Nevertheless, I am going to continue to work for the solution, as I have been doing during these three weeks. The questions for consideration are simple. Has the Rajaji formula or mine made a reasonable approach to the Lahore resolution? If they or either of them is such an approach, all parties and especially the members of the Muslim League should ask the Qaid-e-Azam to revise his opinion. If Rajaji and I have stultified the Lahore resolution, we should be educated. The chief thing is for the press and the public to avoid partisanship and bitterness."

"I shall act as my inner voice tells me," observed Gandhi in reply to a question regarding his future plans. Asked how far the offer he had made conceded the demand made in the Lahore resolution, he emphasized that the Rajaji formula or the formula that he had presented conceded the substance of the League demand. "In my opinion, either formula concedes as much as can reasonably be expected with due regard to the interests of the whole of India."

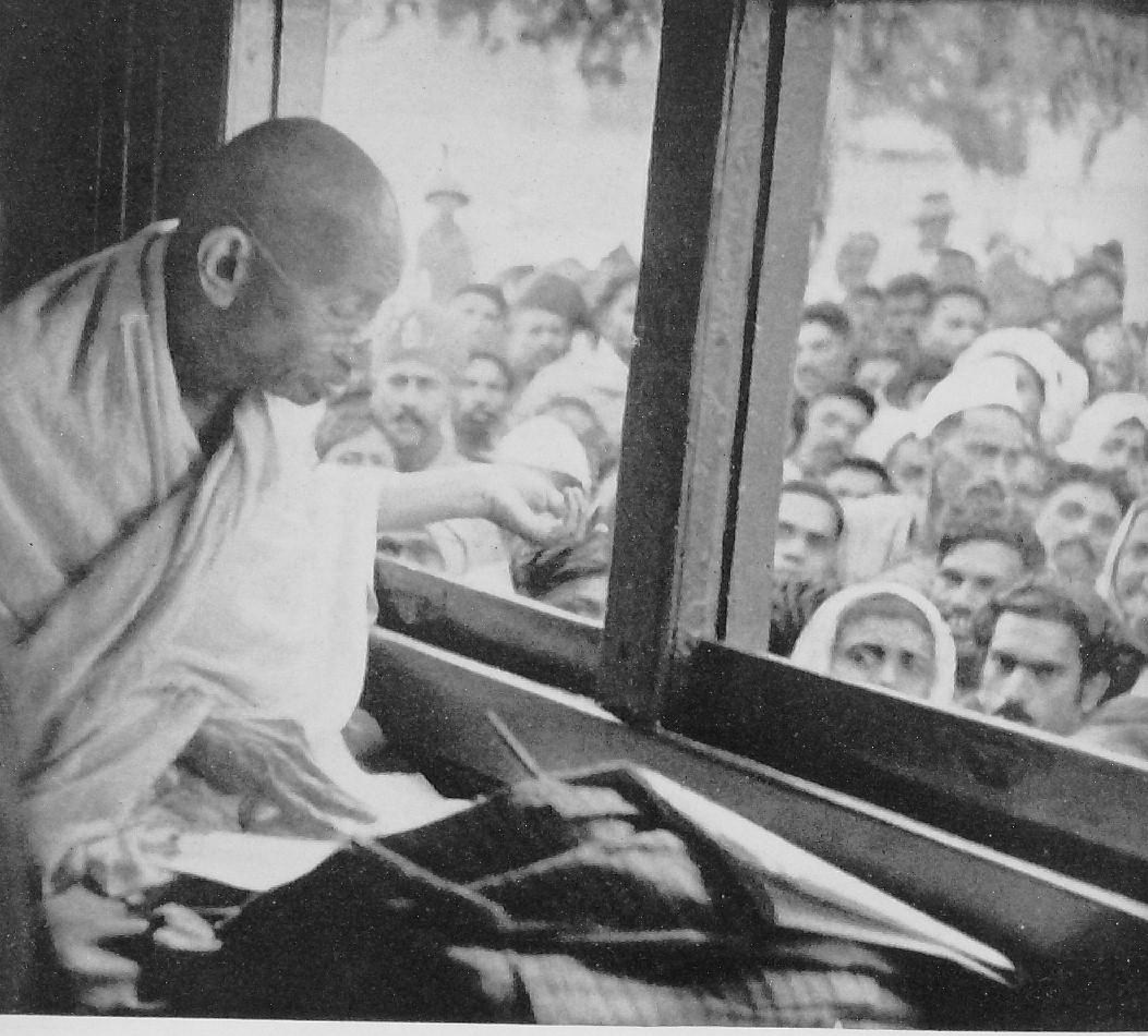
In answer to a question whether his offer was to be treated now as withdrawn, he said that, so far as he was concerned, the offer he had made stood. The offer was not made in any bargaining spirit. "I think," he asserted, "it is the just solution of the problem and it is in the spirit of the policy which the Congress has consistently adopted in connection with the communal question, namely, self-determination."

A number of questions were put on the representative character of the two leaders who conducted the negotiations and why did he prolong the talks when he was apprised of Jinnah's views on the first day of the talks.

Gandhi answered: "I am a man reputed to have inexhaustible patience and I had no reason to despair of either being converted by the Qaid-e-Azam or, in my turn, converting him. Therefore, so long as there was the slightest possibility, I clung to the hope that we shall pull through to a solution. Haste in such cases is the most dangerous thing. You should, therefore, conclude that yesterday was really the moment when the public should have been taken into confidence. As for myself, I am entirely satisfied that we have not wasted these three weeks. And I have no doubt whatsoever that we know now each other better than ever before."

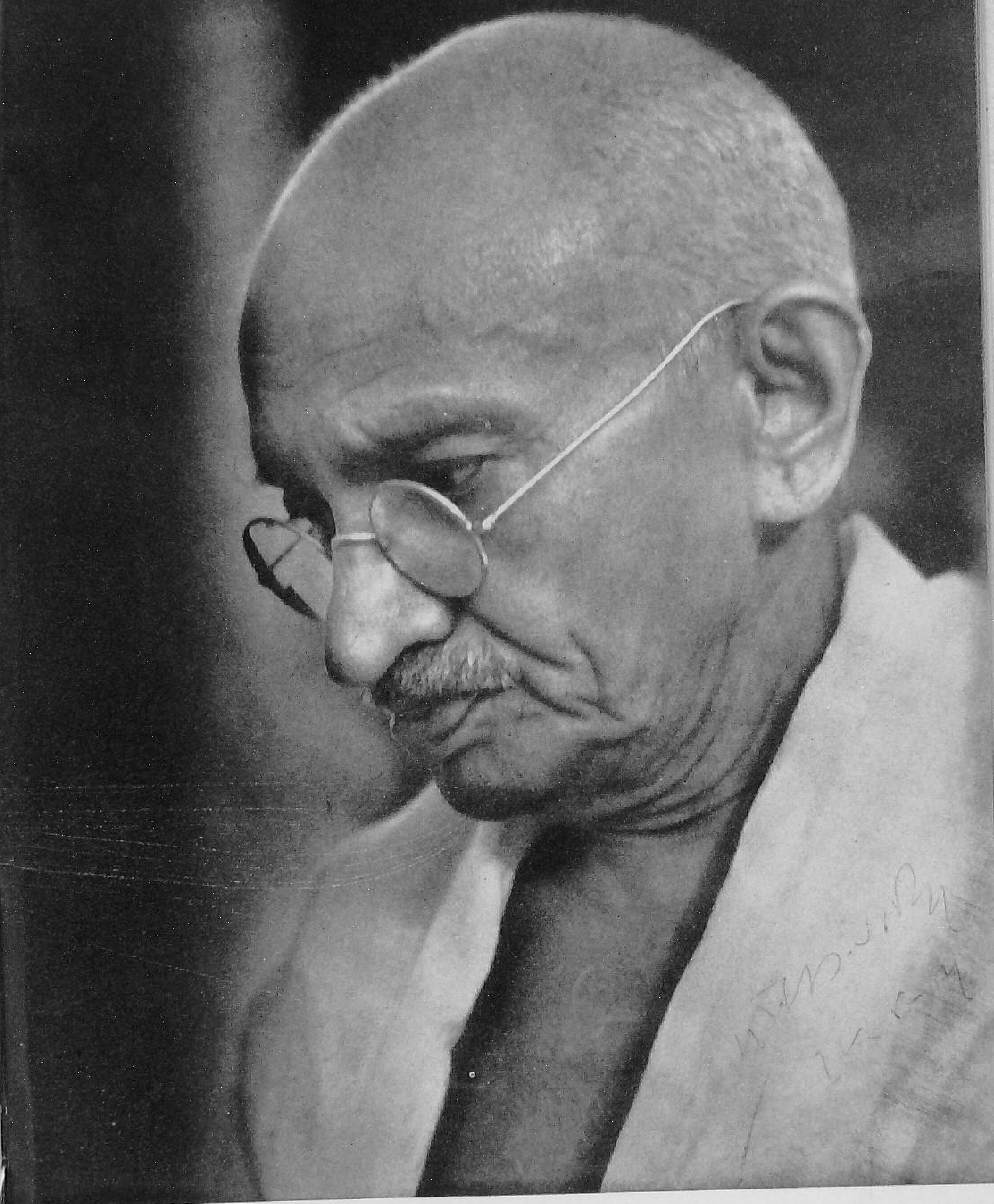
Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

Gandhi facing the anti-Pakistan demonstrators at Sevagram on the eve of his talks with Jinnah, September 8, 1944



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

On the way to Bombay, September 8, 1944

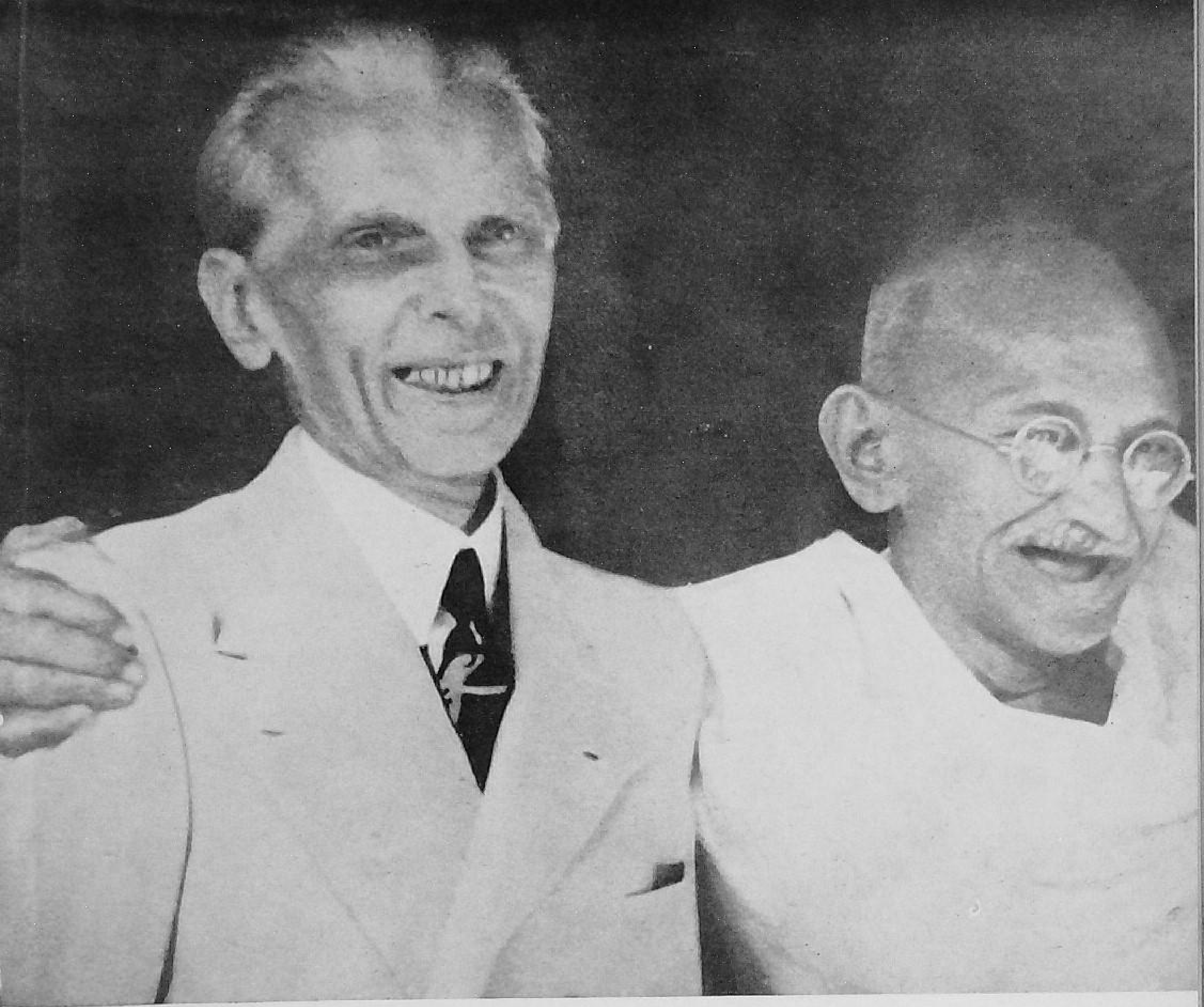


Photograph: D. R. D. Wadia

Gandhi, Bombay, September 1944

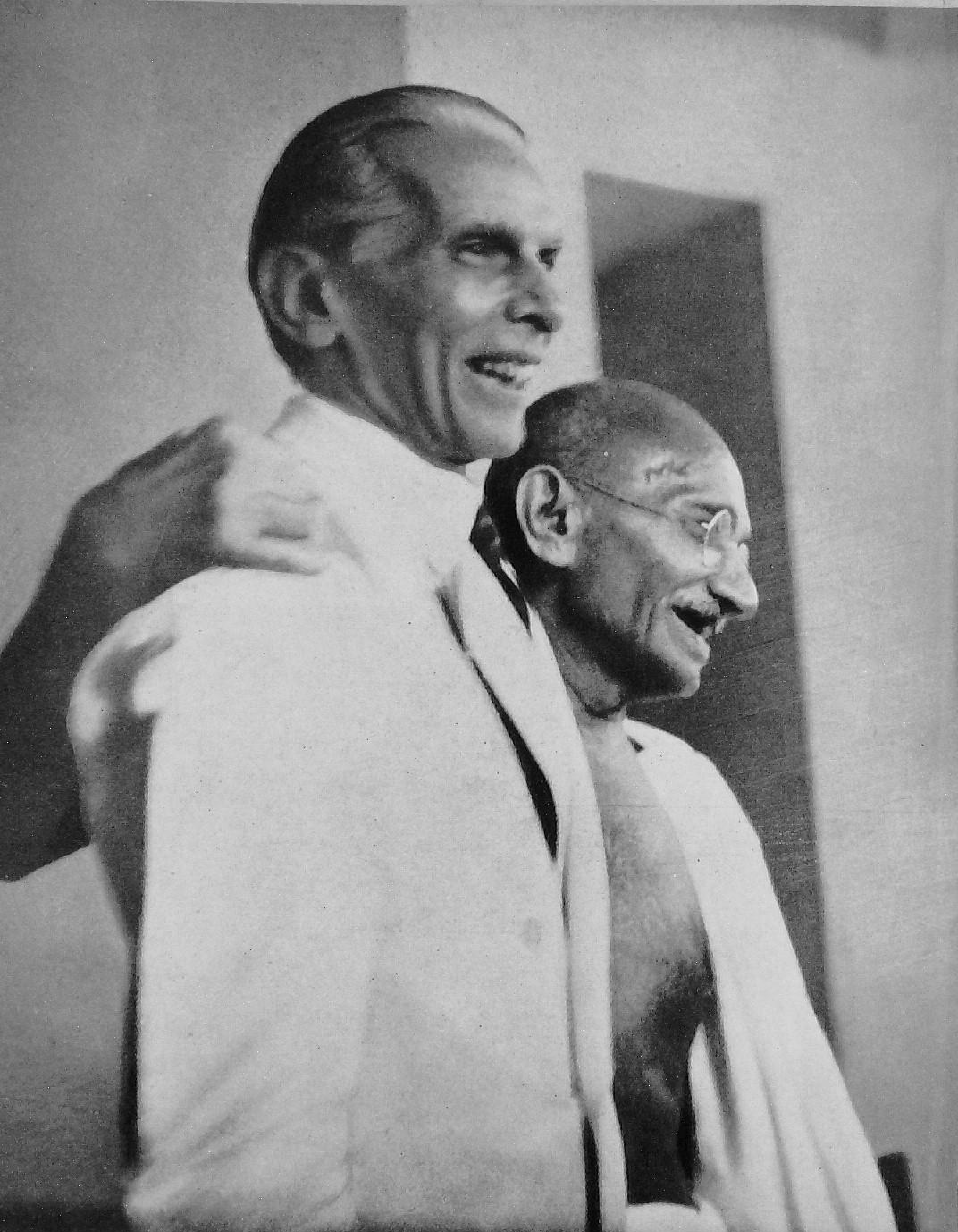
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Jinnah receives Gandhi, Bombay, September 9, 1944



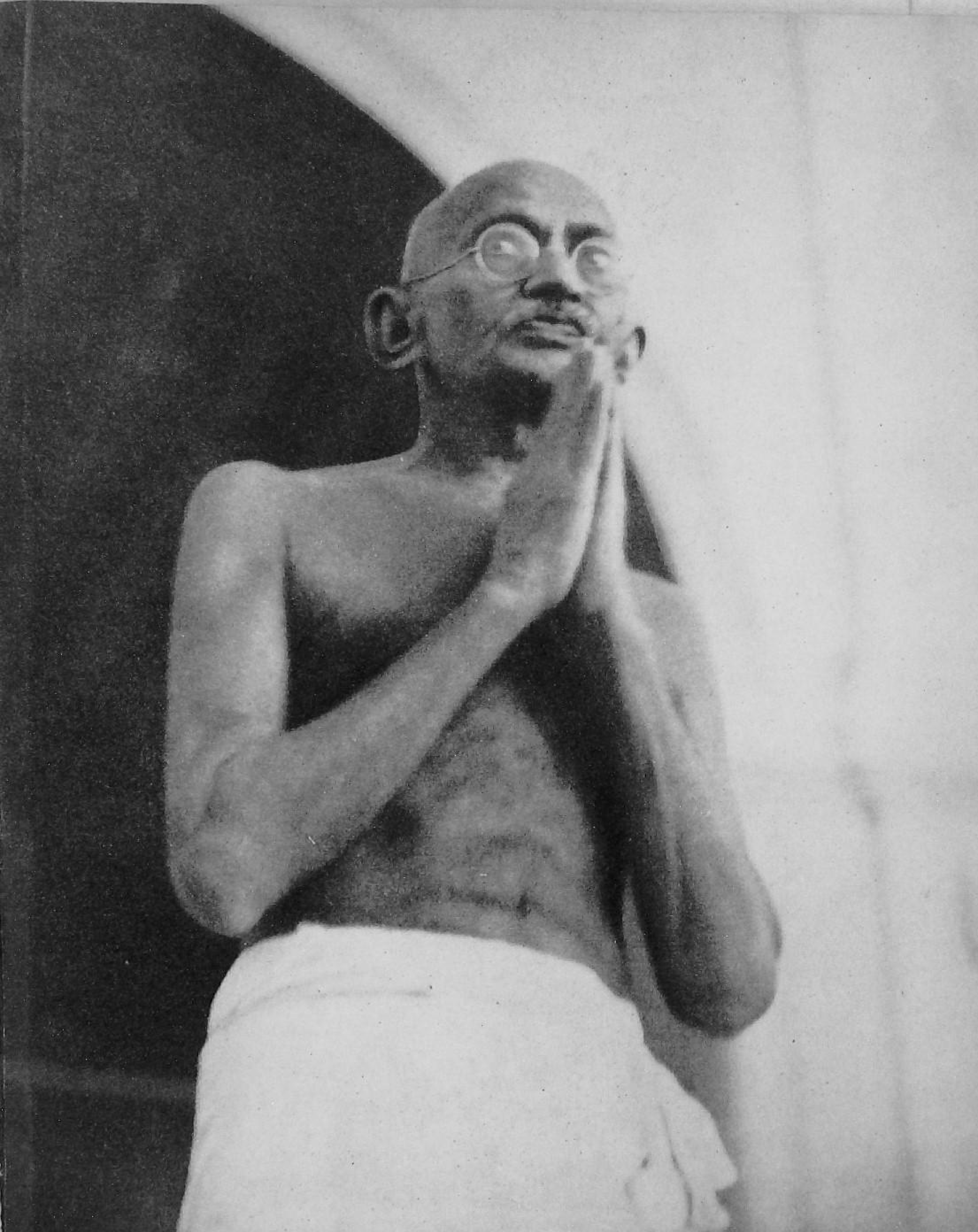
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Jinnah and Gandhi standing before cameramen



Photograph : Sunil Janah

Before the talks commenced, Bombay, September 9, 1944

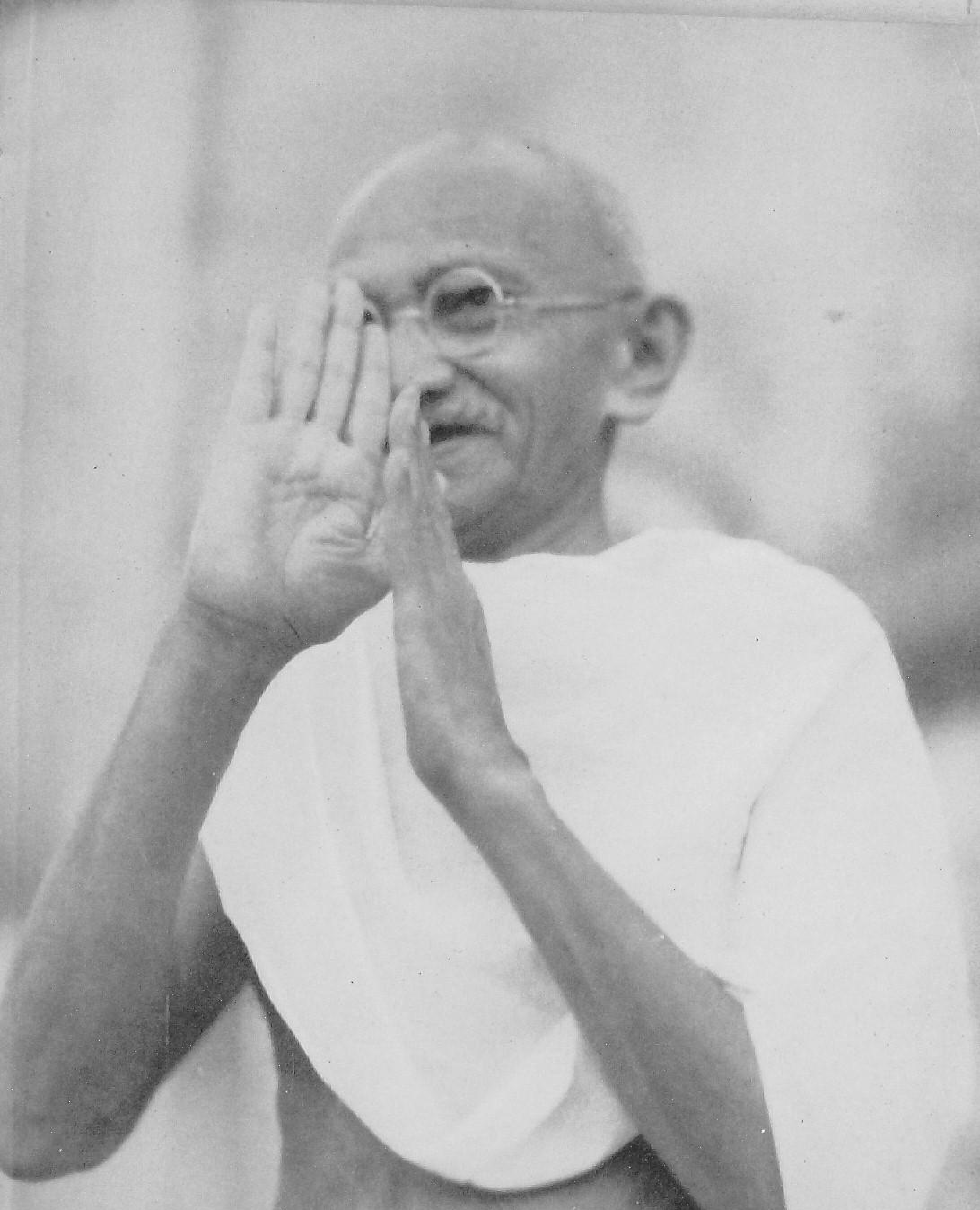


From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Greeting the public at the prayer meeting, Rungta House, Bombay, September 1944

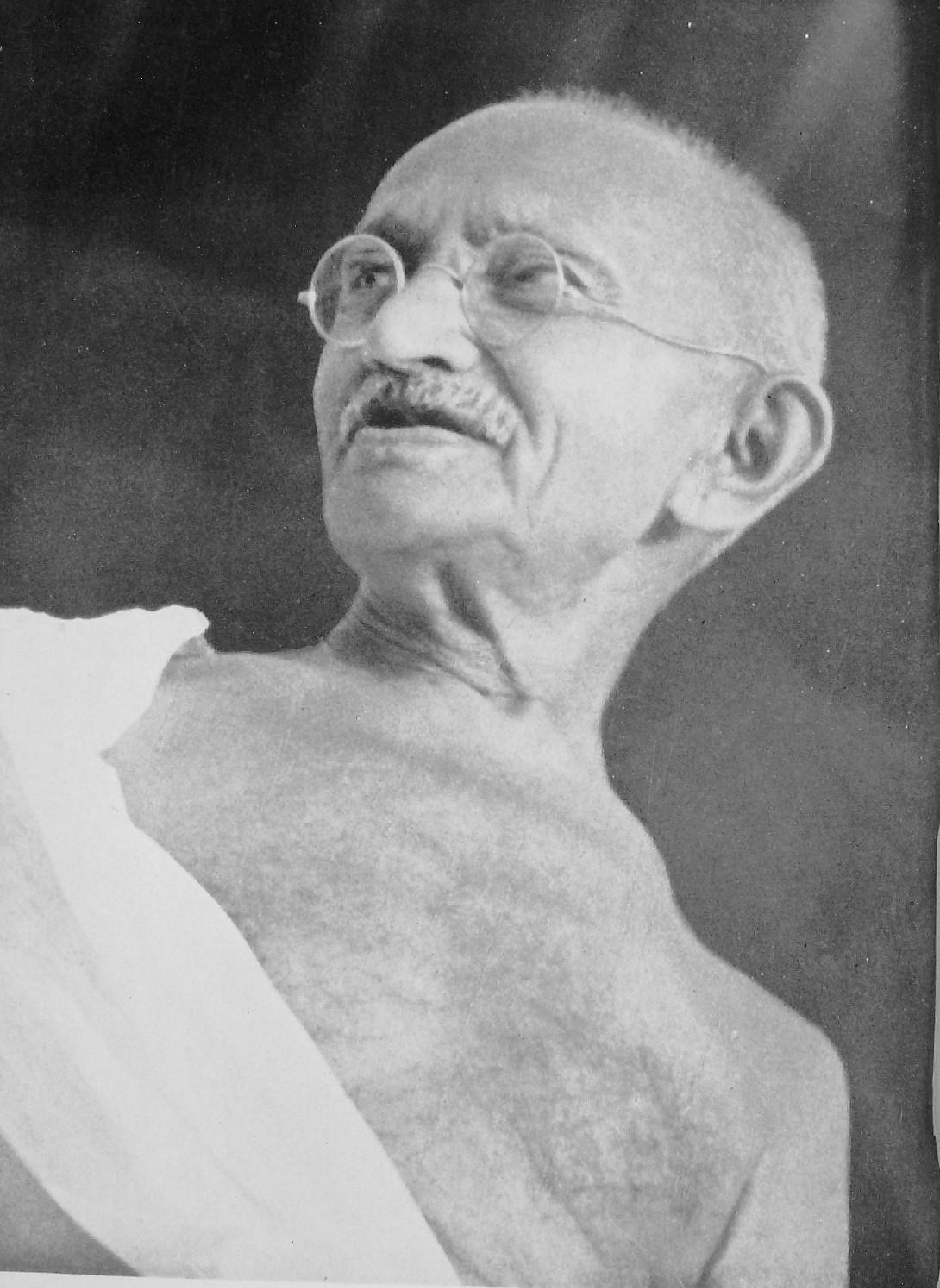
Photograph : Universal News

Requesting the public to keep quiet during



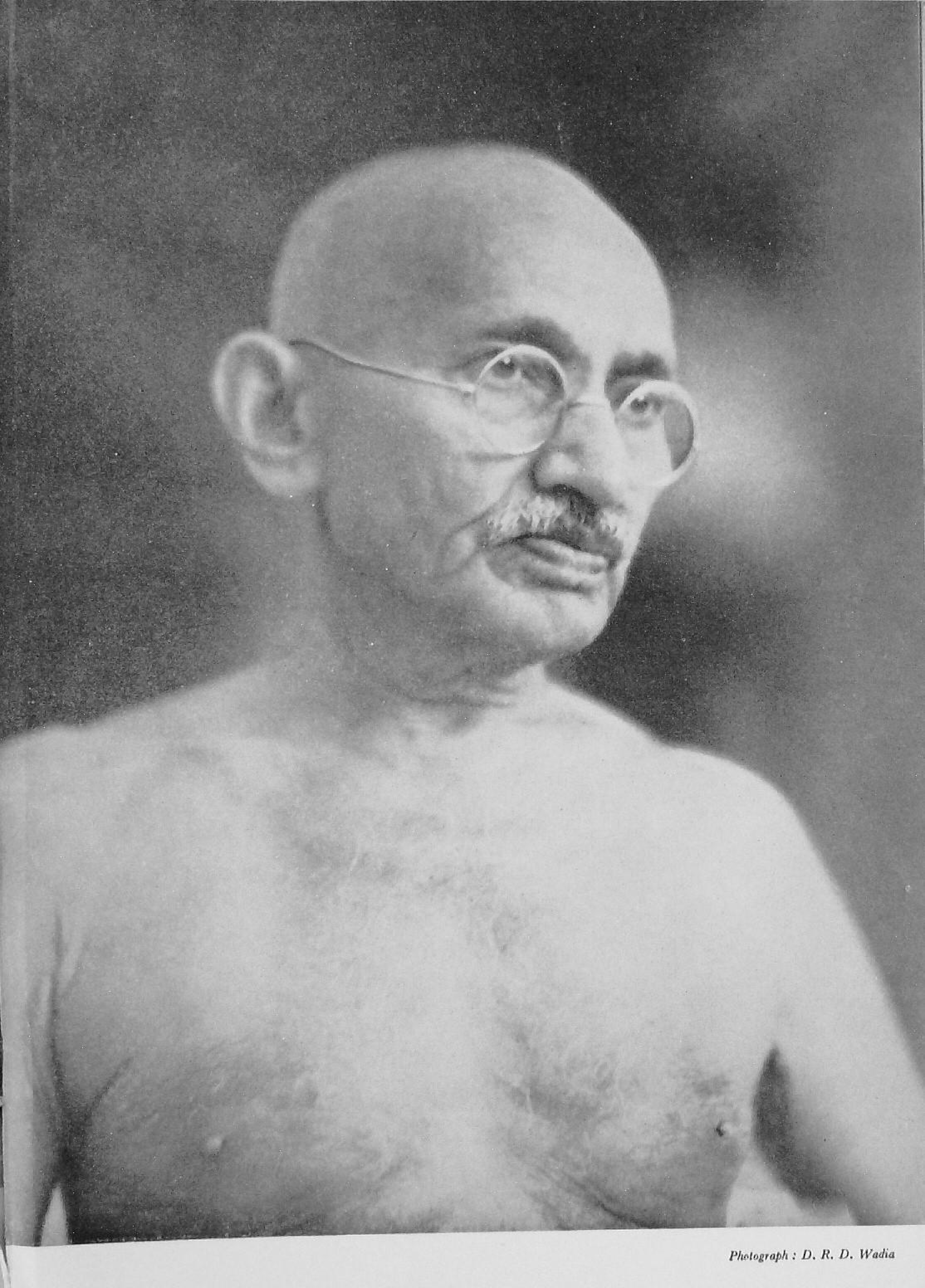
Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

the prayer meeting, Bombay, September 1944



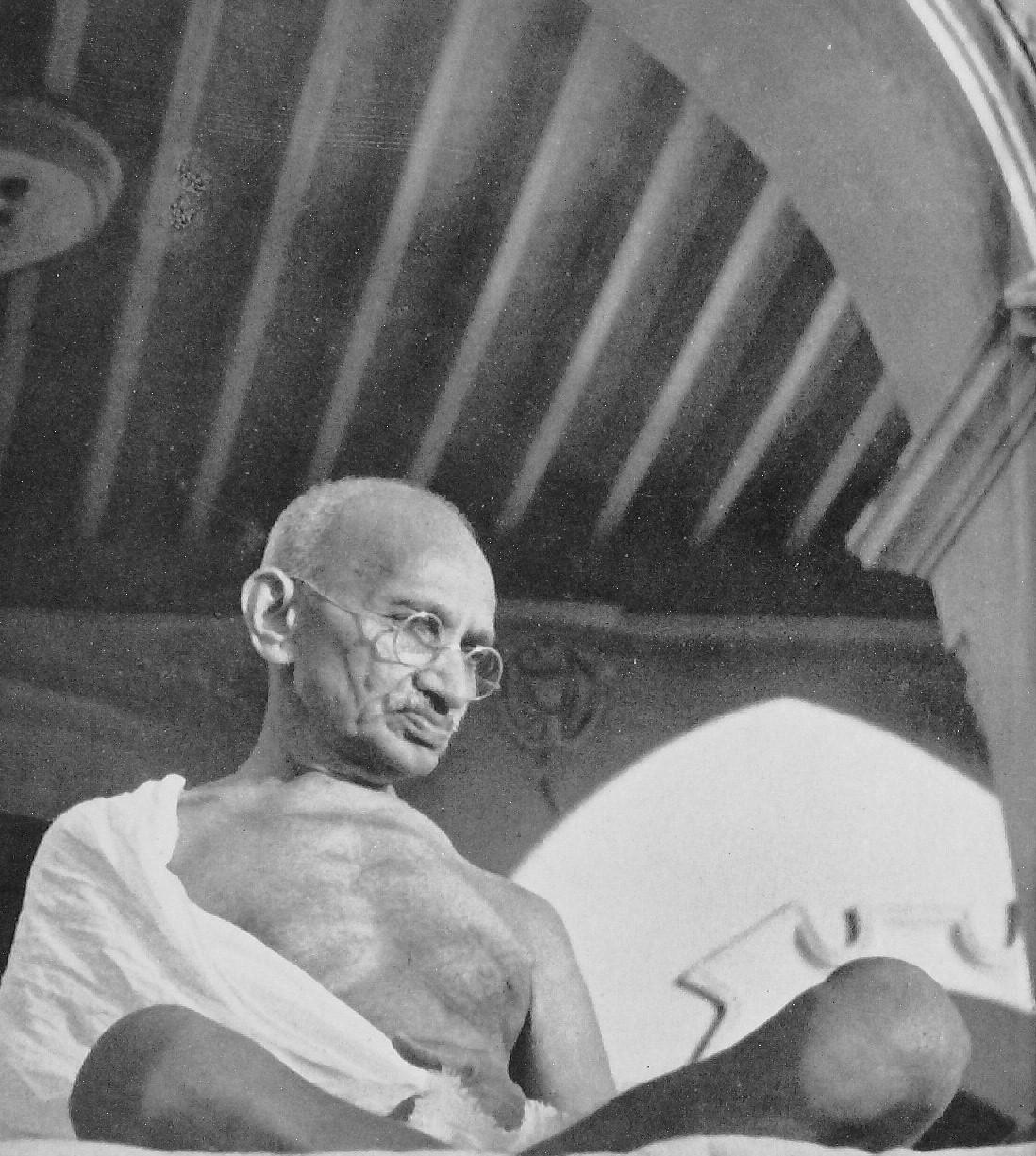
Photograph : Sunil Janah

During the prayer meeting,

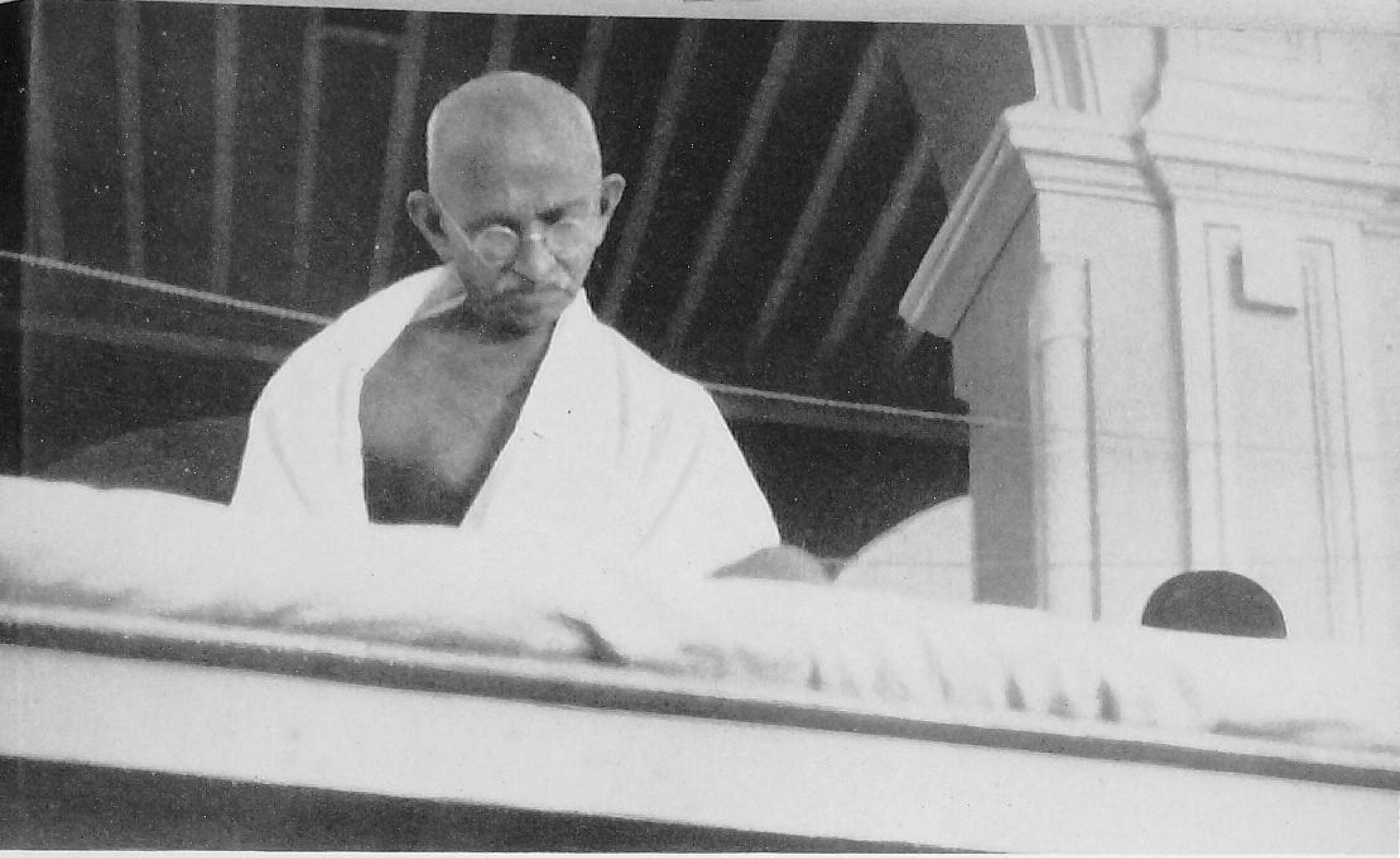


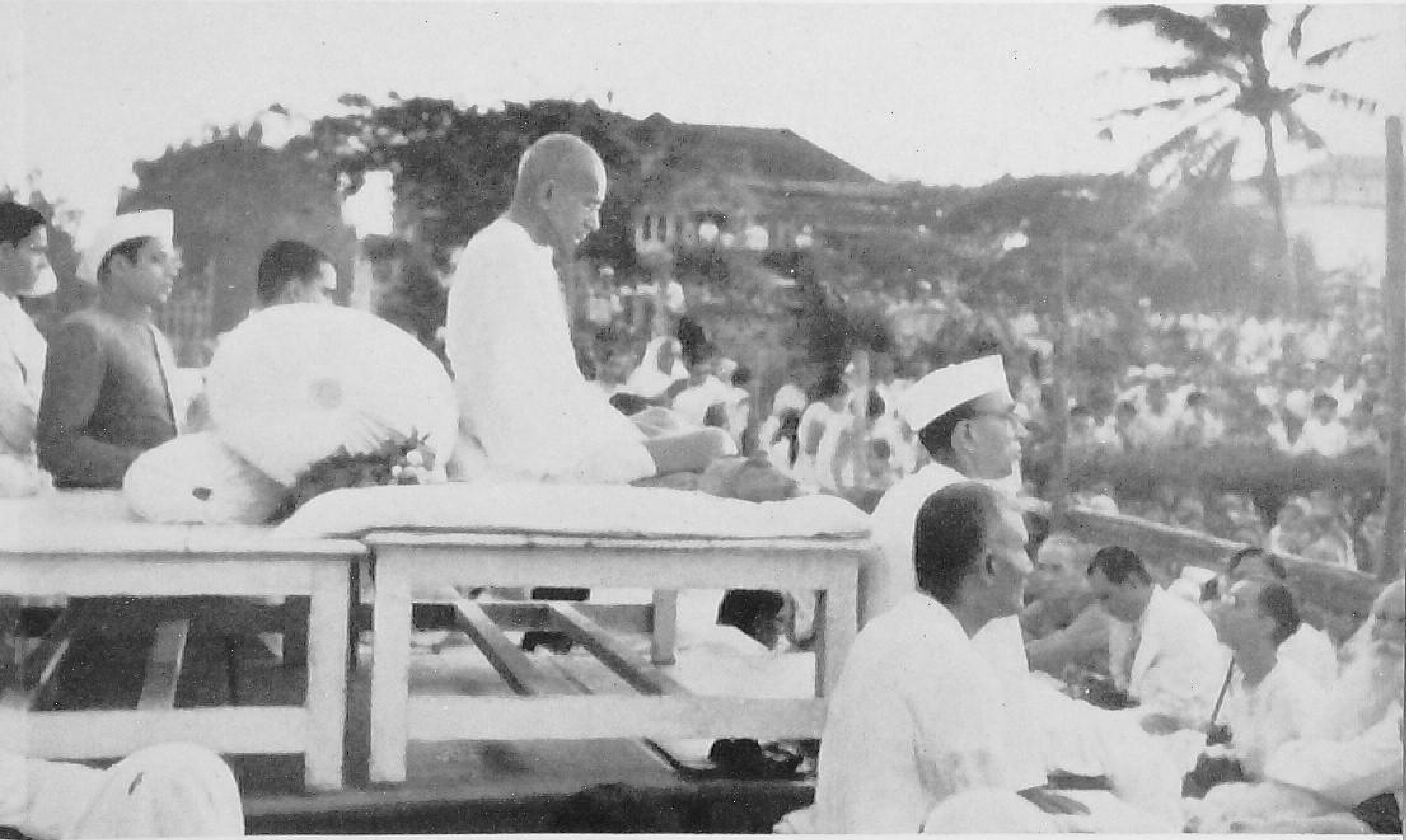
Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

Bombay, September 1944



Gandhi at the prayer meeting,



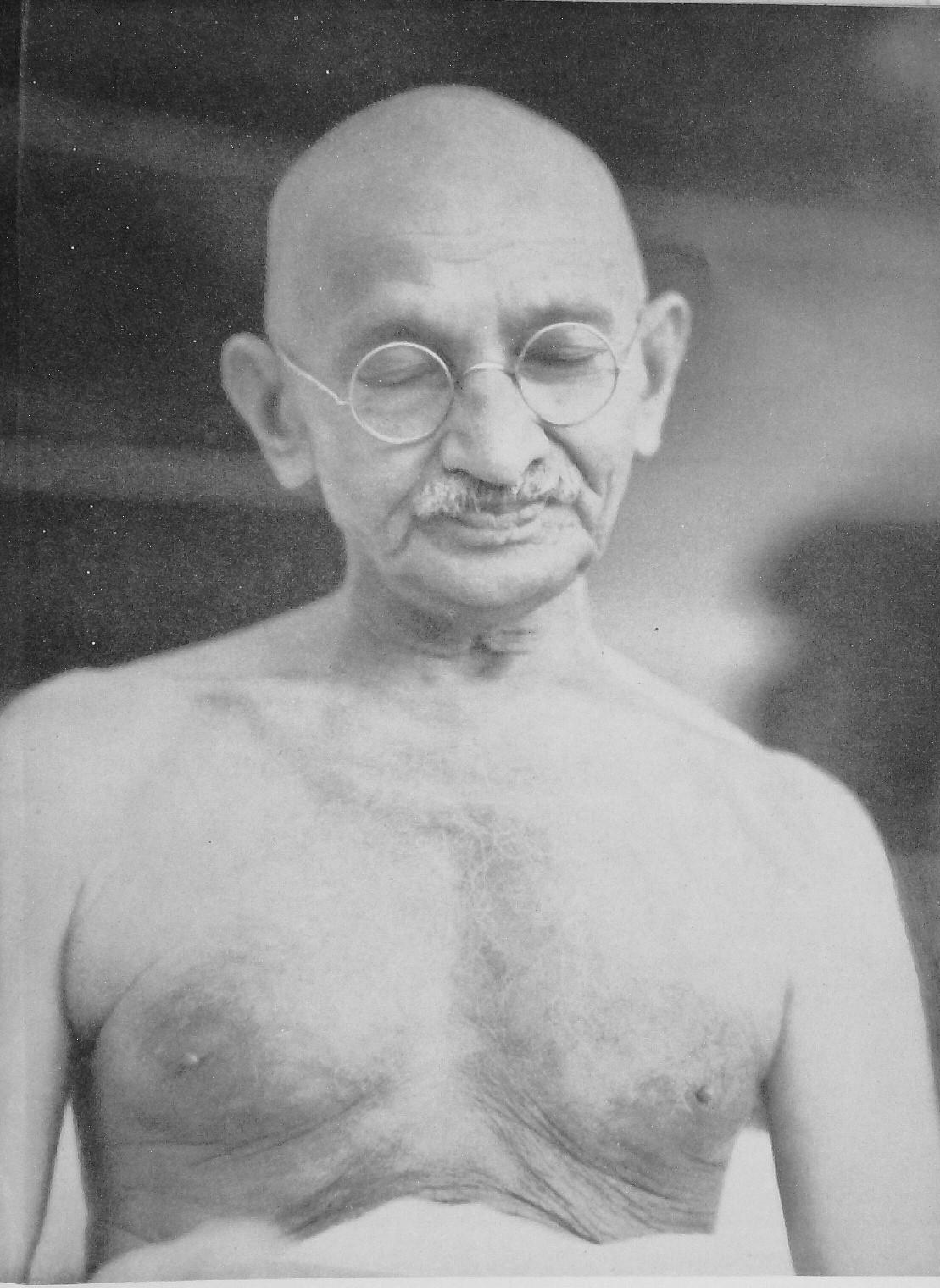


Photographs : Sunil Janah

Rungta House, Bombay, September 1944

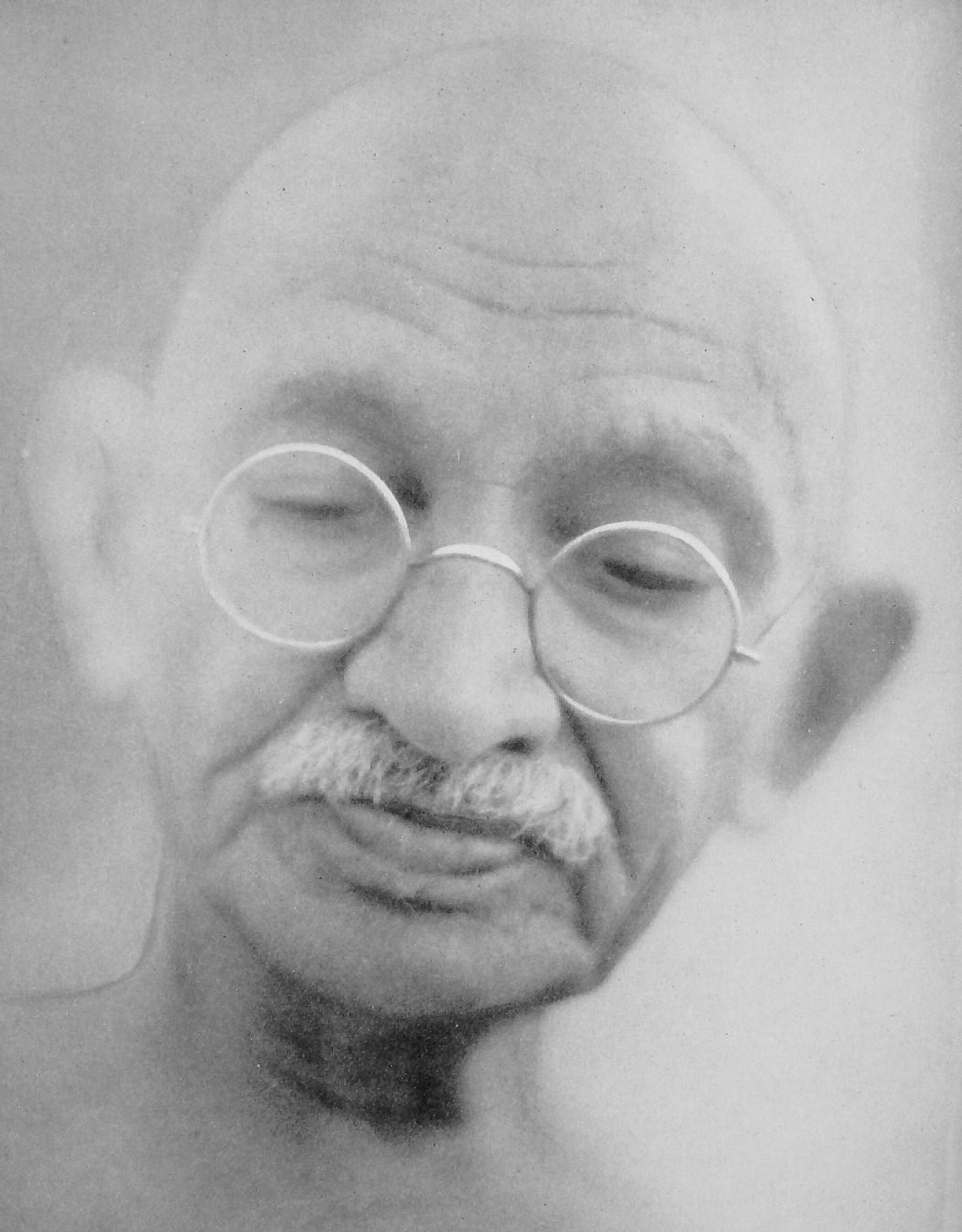
Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

During the chanting of prayers, Bombay, September 1944

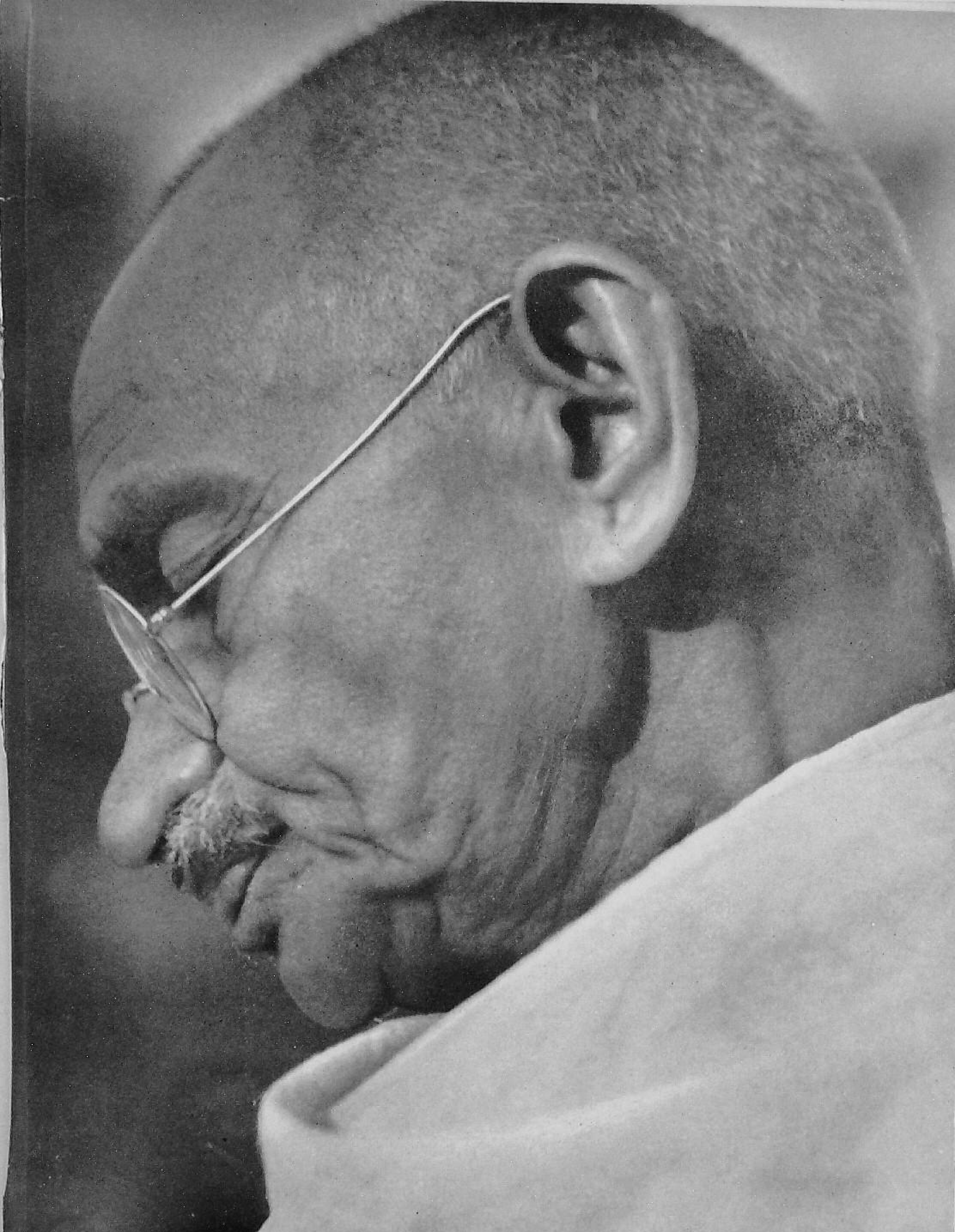


Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

At prayer

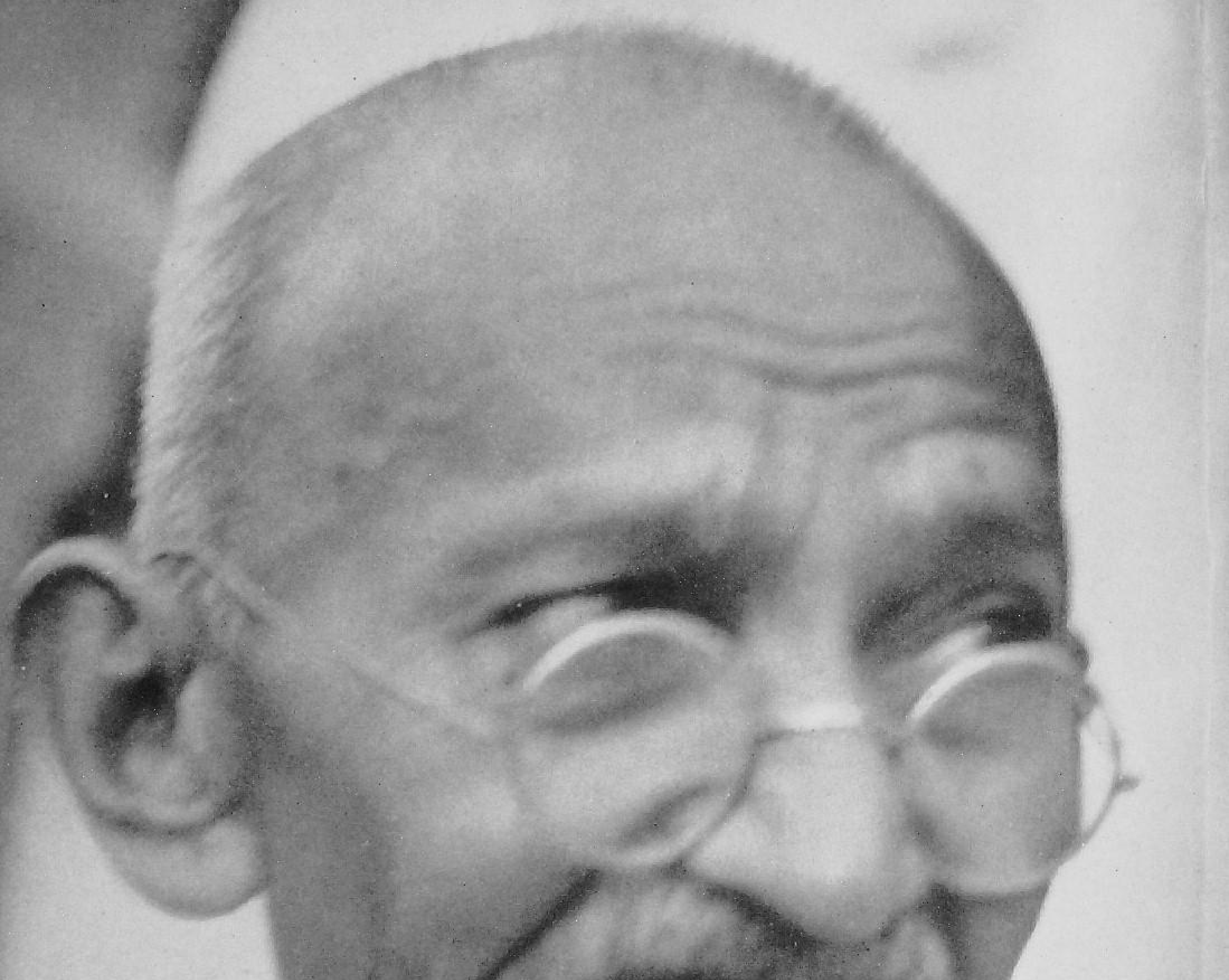


Gandhi in



Photographs : D. R. D. Wadia

meditation

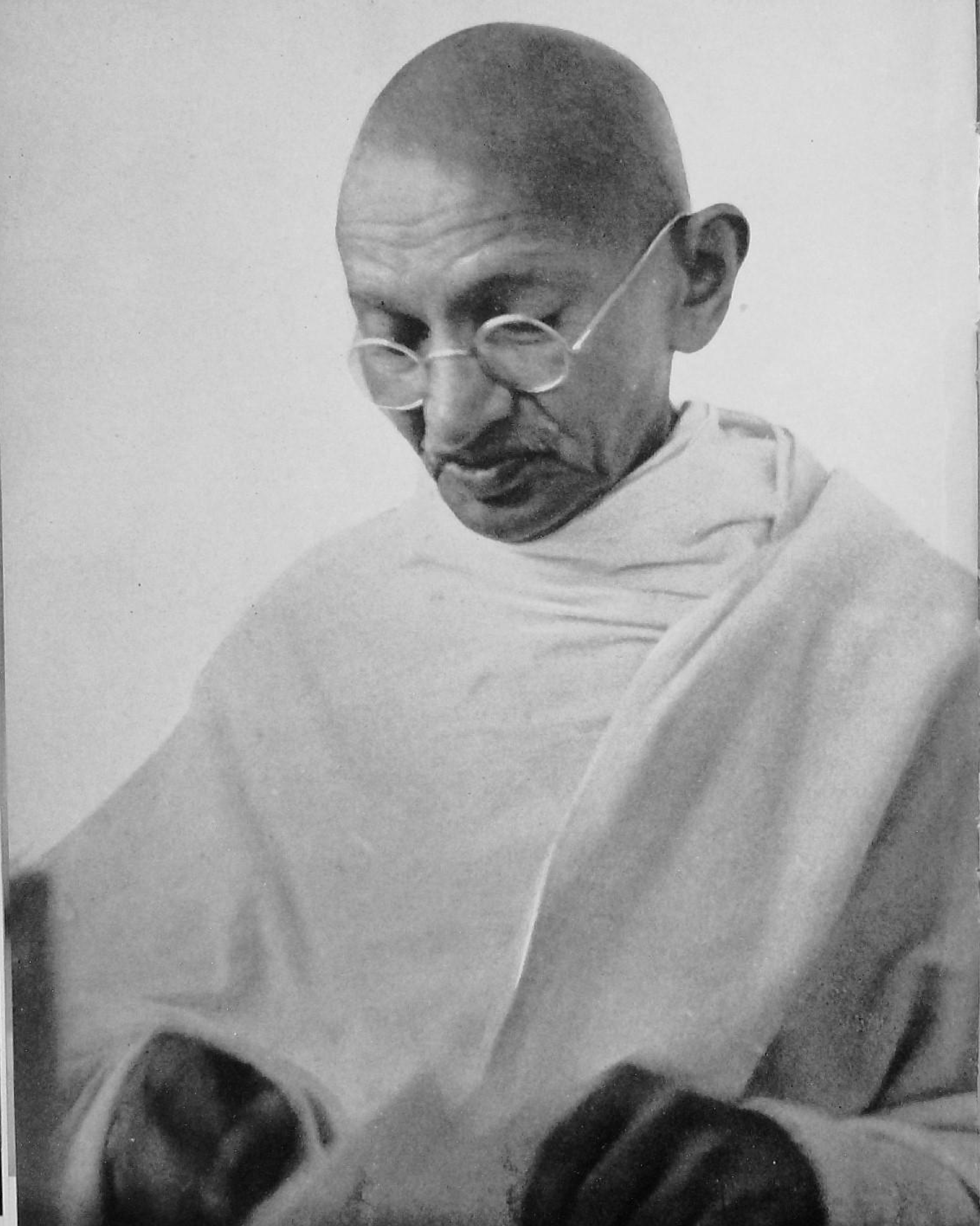


Photograph : M. Desai

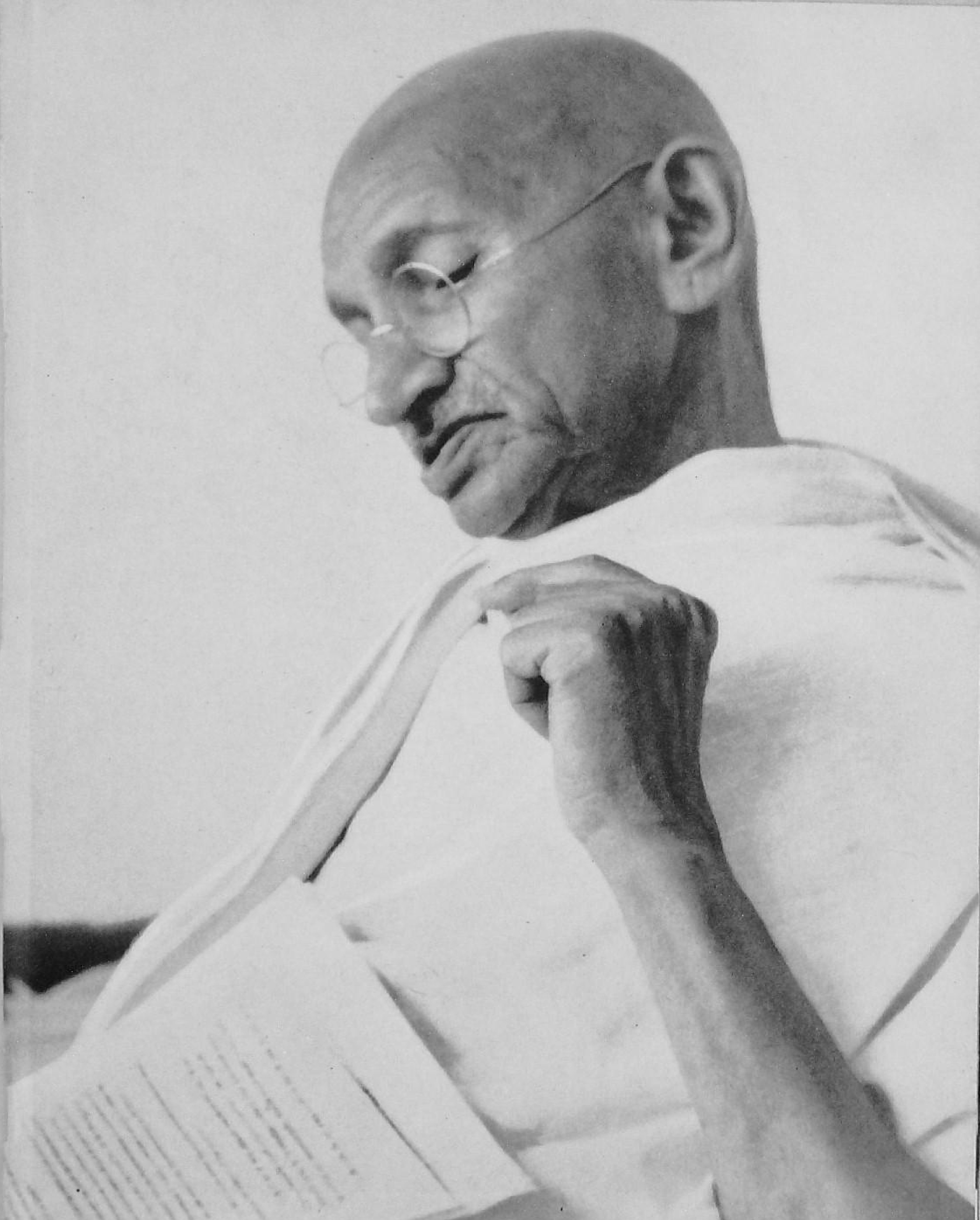
During the

Photograph : Sunil Janah

Gandhi-Jinnah parleys

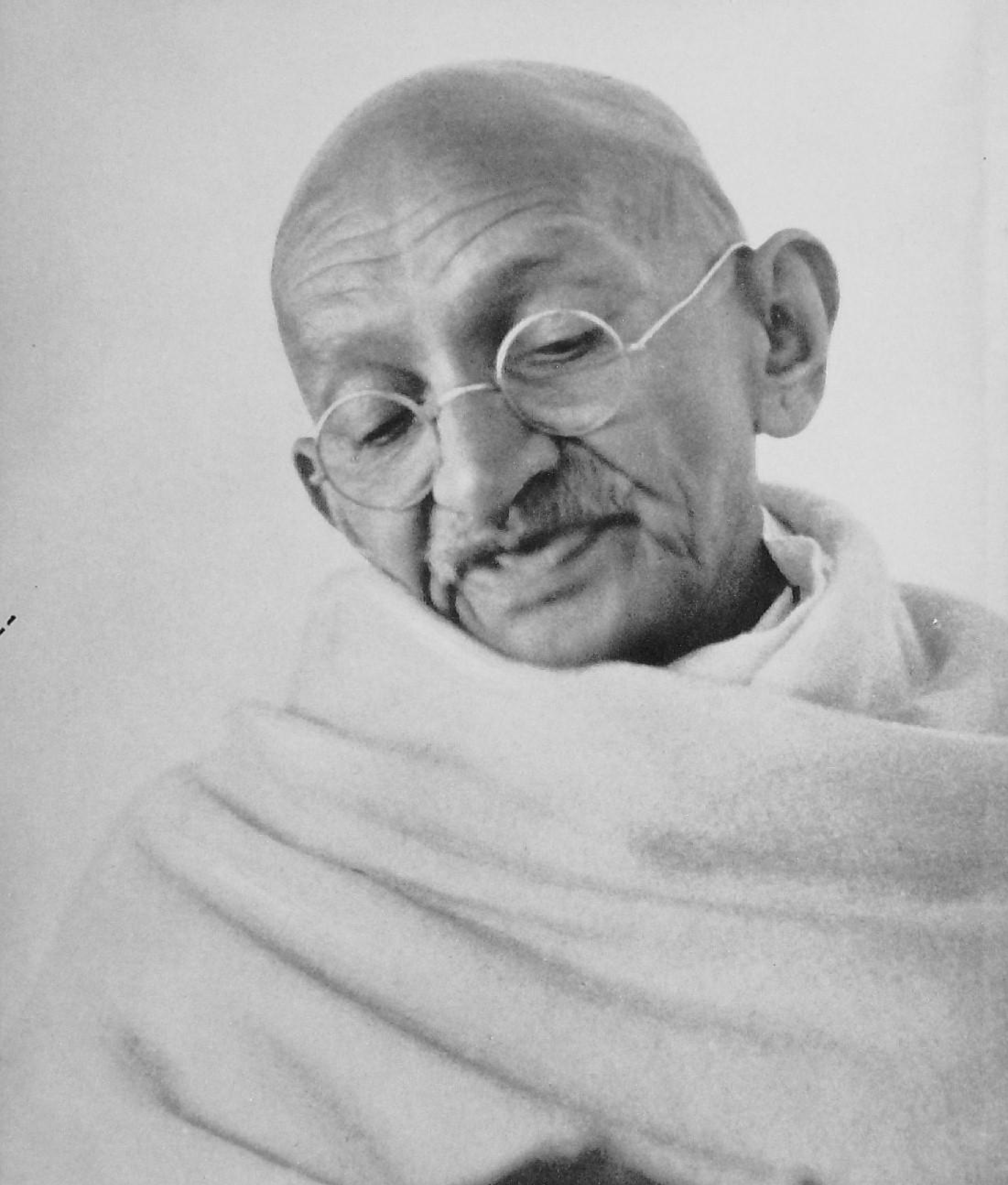


Studying

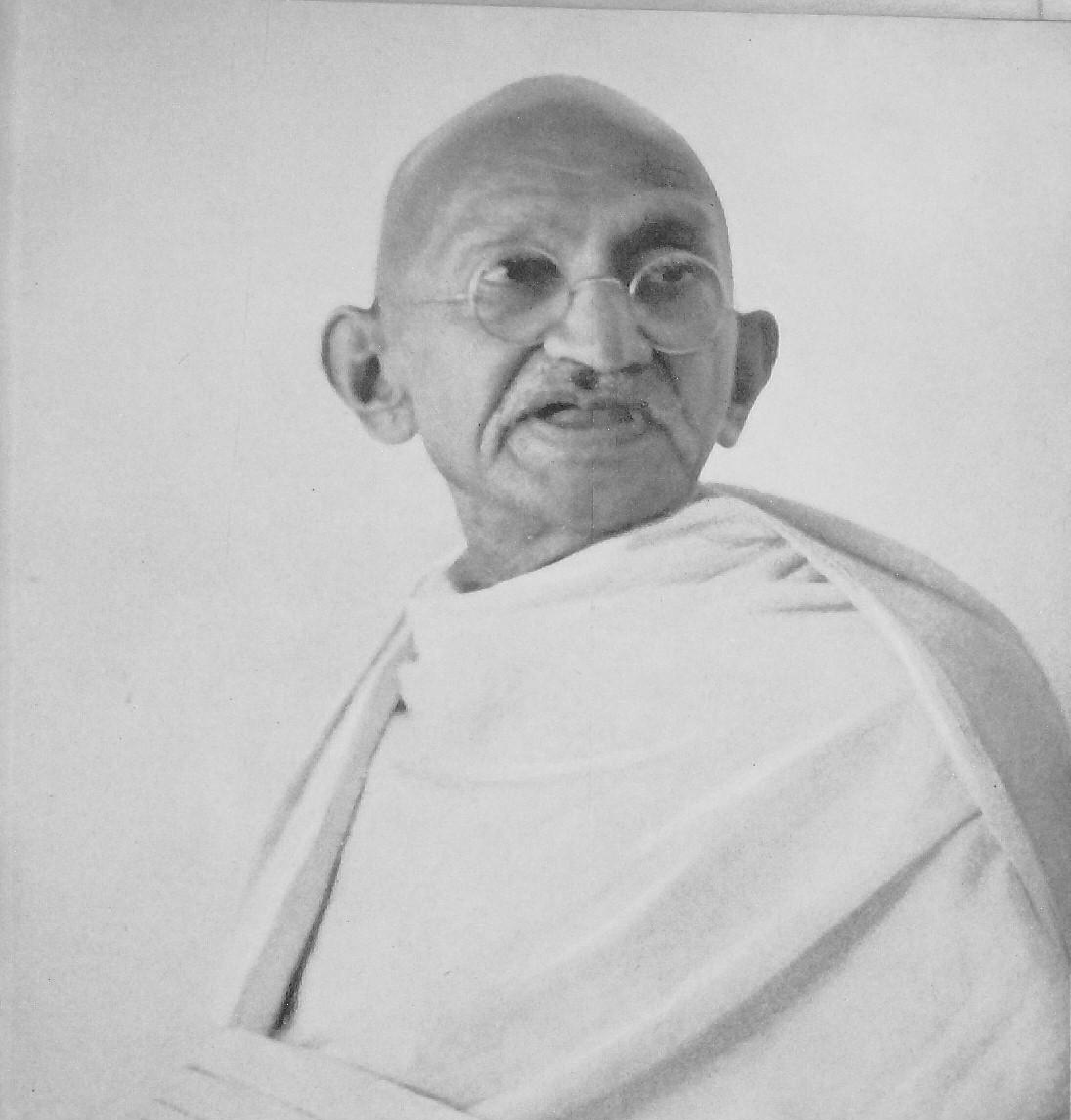


Photographs : Sunil Janah

the draft

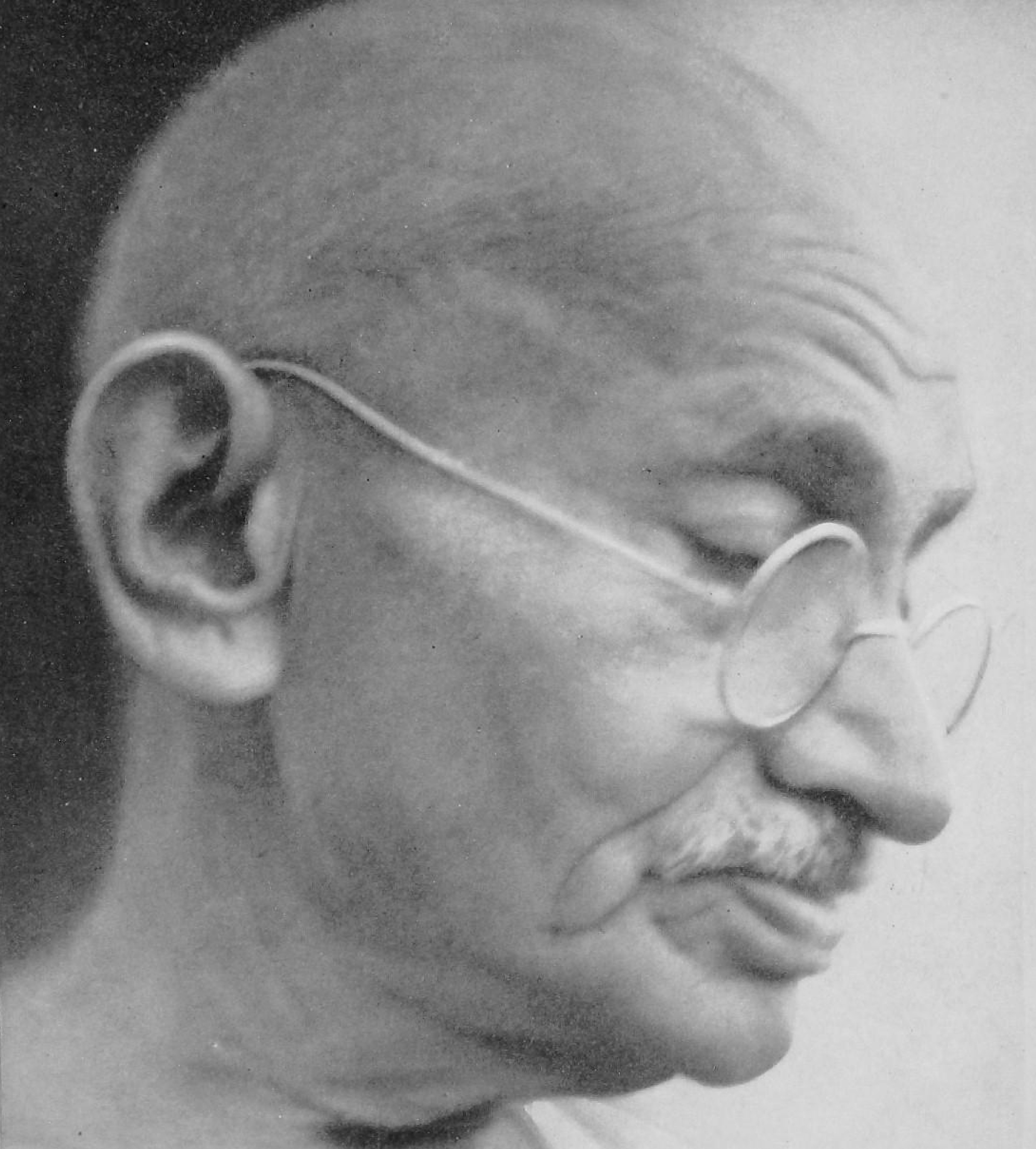


Thinking



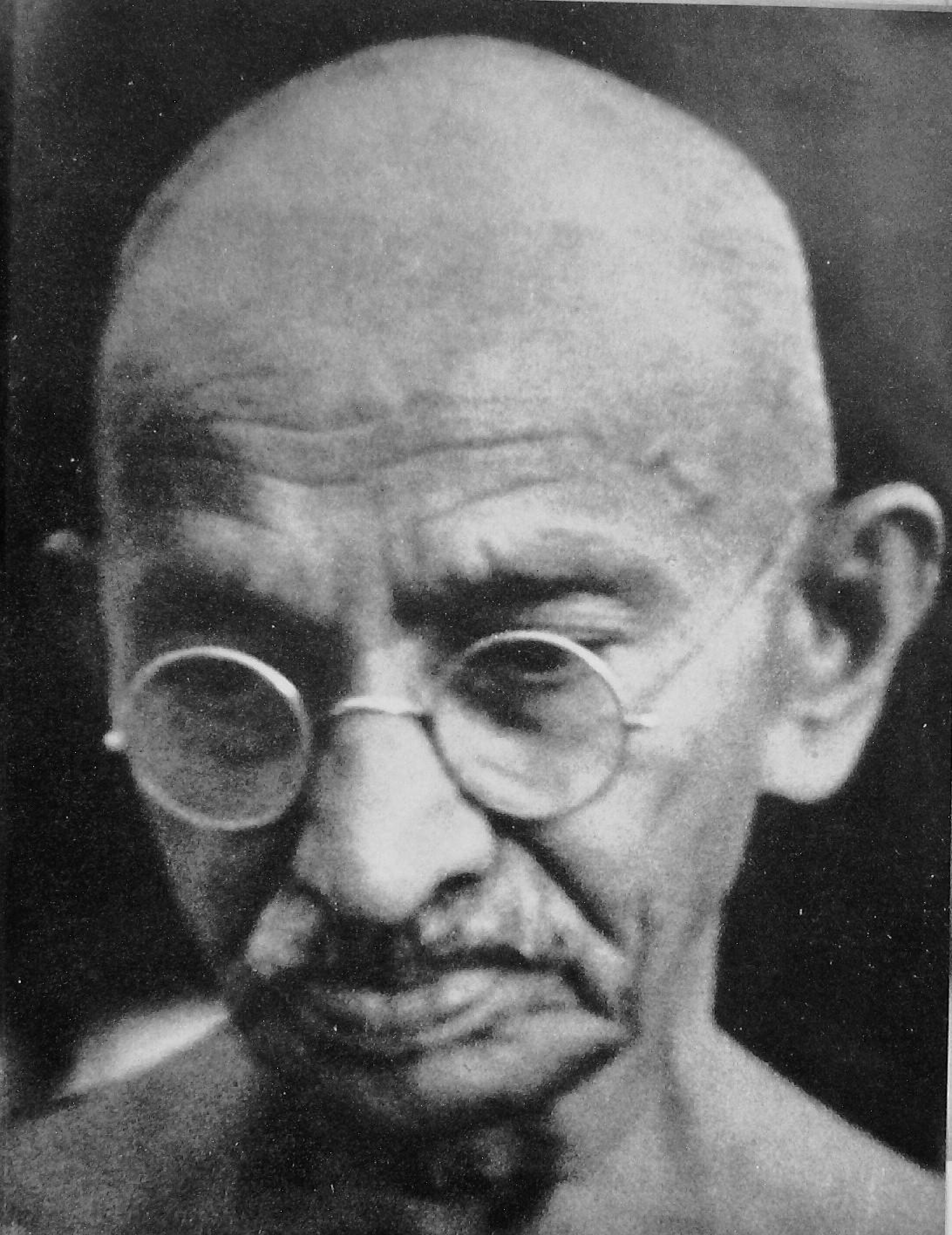
Photographs : Sunil Janah

it over



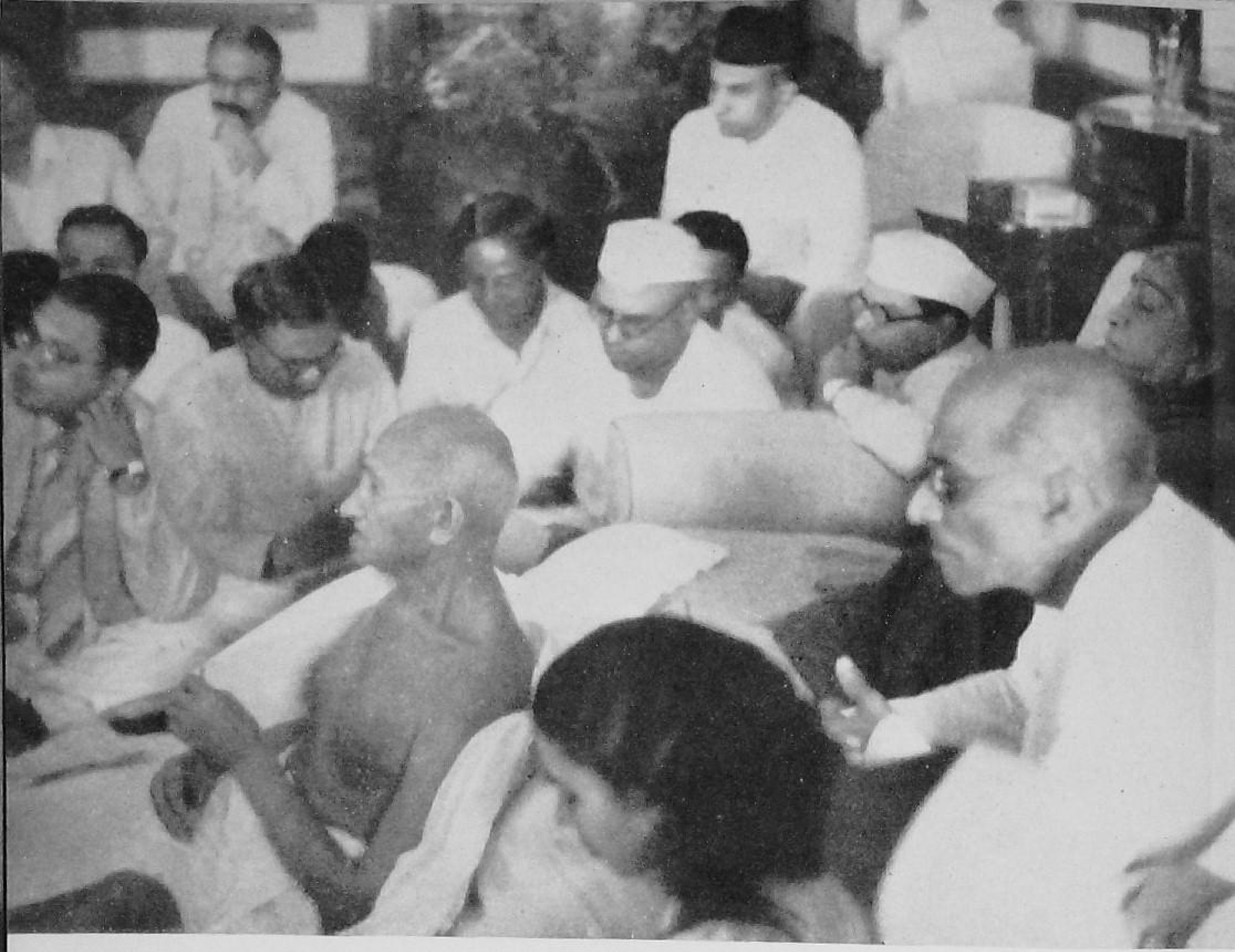
Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

During his stay in



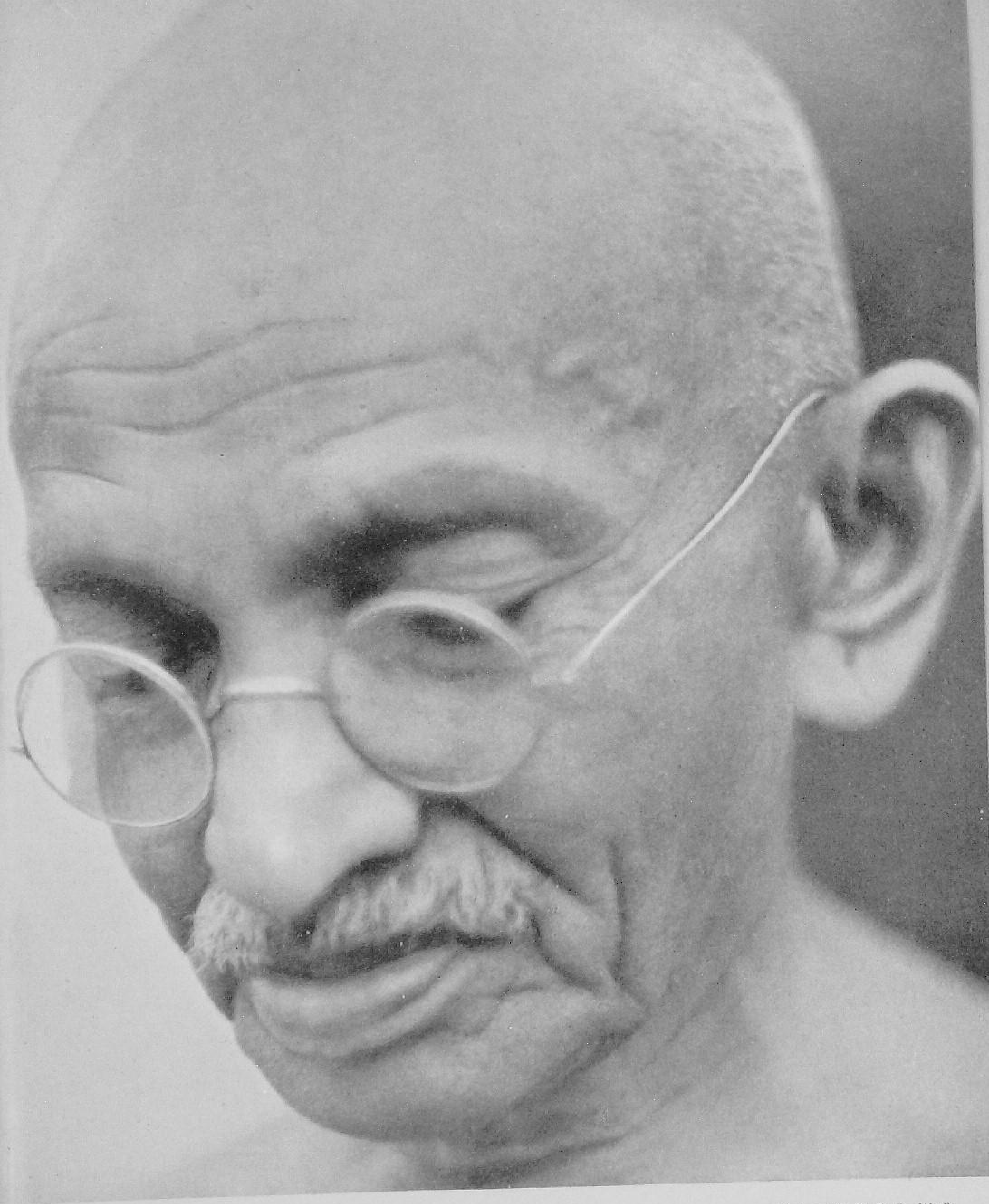
Photograph : M. Desai

Bombay, September 1944



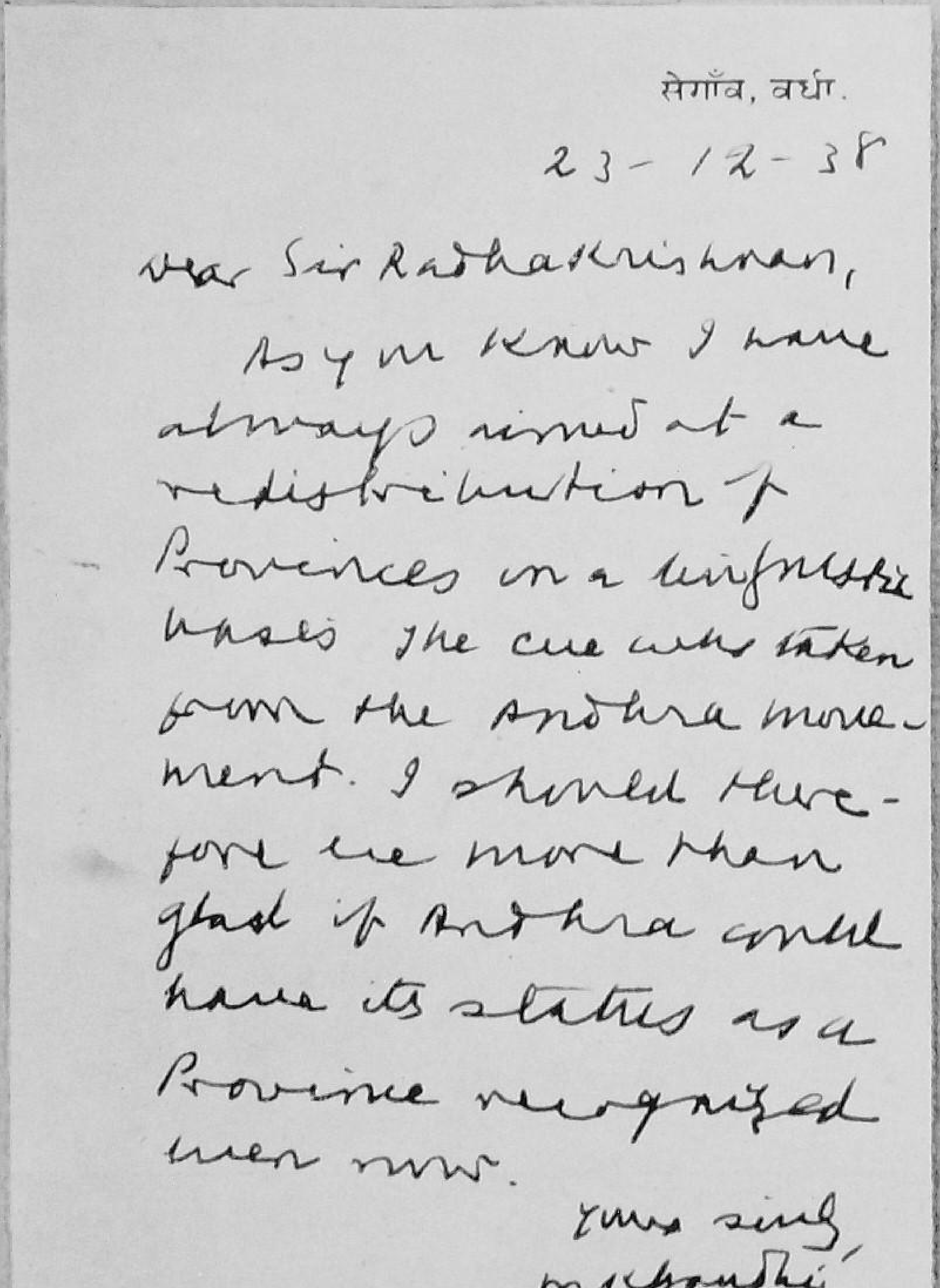
Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

At the press conference, Birla House, Bombay, September 28, 1944



Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

During the press conference



सेगाँव, वर्धा.

23-12-38

Dear Sir Radhakrishnan,

As you know I have always aimed at a redistribution of Provinces on a linguistic basis. The cue was taken from the Andhra movement. I should therefore be more than glad if Andhra could have its status as a Province recognized even now.

Yours sincerely,

M. K. Gandhi

Courtesy: Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

Gandhi's views on redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis

"When you agreed to meet Mr. Jinnah, did you meet him on the basis that he was the sole representative of the Musalmans?" a reporter asked.

Gandhi replied: "I have never admitted that claim, but I have said throughout that the Muslim League is by far the most representative Muslim organization. It would have been folly on my part not to recognize this, but I have always been aware that there is outside the League a large body of Muslims which does not see eye to eye with the League and which does not believe in the two nations theory."

Gandhi said that the fight for freedom had not been suspended when he approached Jinnah. "My approach to the Qaid-e-Azam was itself a part of the fight for freedom."

Asked if there was any possibility of the two leaders meeting in the near future, Gandhi replied: "I hope so. It is for the press and the public to make it possible and hasten the date. I assure you that we have not parted as enemies but as friends."

If the Rajaji formula or his own formula had conceded the substance of the Lahore resolution, then why not agree to the resolution itself? was the next question.

Gandhi replied: "Although the Lahore resolution does not say so, if you study the correspondence, it shows that it is based on the two nations theory and it has been known as the Pakistan resolution. Further, I had to examine the Lahore resolution in view of the interpretation put upon it by the Qaid-e-Azam in his numerous speeches and his statements in elucidation of that resolution. It is indisputable that the resolution, while it does not enunciate that theory, is based upon that theory. The Qaid-e-Azam has insisted upon that. And, therefore, I urge that, apart from the two nations theory, if I could accept the principle of the division of India in accordance with the demand of the League, he should accept it. But unfortunately it was just there we split."

About Jinnah's views regarding a provisional interim government, Gandhi stated: "I am not sure that the Qaid-e-Azam puts great weight on the interim government. I gave all the explanation of my conception of an interim government without any reservation. It is quite clear in my letter. If I did not go any further, it was because I could not and, even if you cross-examine me any further, I would have to say that I could not go any further. But if, as you suggest,

the Qaid-e-Azam attached greater weight to it, then it was open to him to put it into concrete form. I would have then taxed myself and spared no effort to accept the proposition or make some other suggestions."

Gandhi was told that those Muslims who did not see eye to eye with the Muslim League had no real Muslim backing. He replied: "Therefore, I have said that the Muslim League is by far the more representative of Muslim opinion, but I cannot despise the others by simply saying that they have no Muslim backing. What does it matter if they have no more Muslim backing, if the opinion represented by a single Muslim or by a body of Muslims, whom you can count on your fingers, is intrinsically sound? The way of approaching any question is not to examine the numerical strength of those behind the opinion, but to examine the soundness of the opinion on merits, or else we will never reach a solution, and if we reach one, it will be a blind solution, simply because it is the wish of the largest body. If the largest body goes wrong, it is up to me to say you are wrong and not to submit."

"The rule of majority," Gandhi added, "does not mean that it should suppress the opinion of even an individual, if it is sound. The opinion of an individual should have greater weight than the opinion of many, if that opinion is sound on merits. That is my view of real democracy."

Gandhi was asked what he thought of the idea of the formation of provinces on linguistic, cultural and communal basis. He replied that since 1920, he stood for provinces on a linguistic basis. As for the redistribution on a cultural basis, he did not really know what it meant and he was unable to understand how the provinces could be reconstituted on communal lines, unless there was a suggestion that there should be inter-migration of the various communities to concentrate in particular areas. It seemed to him to be fantastic and impossible. He observed:

"We are not inhabiting a country full of deserts and wastelands. We are a densely populated country and I do not see the slightest chance for such redistribution. In that respect, the Lahore resolution is quite sound—where there is an obvious Muslim majority, they should be allowed to constitute a separate state by themselves and that has been fully conceded in the Rajaji formula or my formula. There is not much distinction between the two formulas. That

right is conceded without the slightest reservation. But if it means utterly independent sovereignty, so that there is to be nothing in common between the two, I hold it is an impossible proposition. That means war to the knife. It is not a proposition that resolves itself into a voluntary or friendly solution.

"Therefore, the Rajaji formula and my formula have presented certain things to be in common between sovereign states. Therefore, there is no question of one party overbearing the other or the Centre having an overbearing Hindu majority. I think our formula should be critically and sympathetically examined and it would be found that the formula concedes everything that could reasonably be conceded, if we consider ourselves to be one family. Children of the same family, dissatisfied with one another by reason of change of religion, if they should separate, then the separation should be within ourselves and not separation in the face of the whole world. When two brothers separate, they do not become enemies of one another in the eyes of the world. The world will still recognize them as brothers."

A journalist remarked that some of the nationalist Muslims felt that Gandhi's meeting with Jinnah had put them in a false position and that they might have to change their attitude towards the Indian nationalism.

He replied that it was an extraordinary suggestion. The nationalist Muslims were nationalists, simply because they could not be otherwise. "I am a nationalist," he said, "not in order to please anybody, but because I cannot be otherwise. And if I approached the Qaid-e-Azam, I approached him in the common interests of myself and the nationalist Muslims and other nationalists. The nationalist Muslims, so far as I know, were delighted when I approached the Qaid-e-Azam and were looking forward to a proper solution in the confidence that I would not sell the interests represented by them. Undoubtedly, a nationalist Muslim represents the nation, but he represents the Muslims also, who are a part of the nation. He would be guilty of disloyalty, if he sacrifices the Muslim interests. But my nationalism has taught me that I would be guilty of disloyalty, if I sacrifice the interests of a single Indian."

Asked if there was any difference between his present attitude towards the Muslim League demand and the stand that he took in 1942, Gandhi said: "There is very great difference. In 1942, Rajaji

had not 'burst' on the scene, as he did at Aga Khan Palace with a concrete proposition. It reflects very great credit on his persistence. Rajaji never takes up a standpoint without the fullest consideration and having taken it up, he follows it to the bitterest end. He had abundant faith in my loyalty and he never gave me up as I have never given him up. When he found me in Aga Khan Palace and presented the formula, I did not take even five minutes and I said 'yes', because I saw it in a concrete shape."

"My mind is narrow," he added. "I have not read much literature. I have not seen much of the world. I have concentrated upon certain things in life and beyond that I have no other interest. Therefore, I could not realize the meaning of Rajaji's stand and I disliked it. But when he came with a concrete formula—I myself a concrete being of flesh and blood—and when he had put something in concrete shape, I felt I could hug it and touch it. Therefore, you see the vast difference between 1942 and today. However, thereby, I have not departed from the Congress standpoint in general terms. The Congress has accepted self-determination and the Rajaji formula has also accepted the principle of self-determination and, therefore, the formula had become common ground."

He explained that he accepted the principle of sovereign states, consistent with friendliness: "Friendliness suggests that before the whole world we must act as one nation, not united by extraneous circumstances, or united by force of British arms, but united by a greater force that is, our own determined will."

In Memoriam

1944-1945

On October 2, 1944, Gandhi's seventy-fifth birthday, Sevagram bore a festive appearance. Tricolour flags were flying over almost every hut in the village. A large pandal was erected in front of Kasturba's hut and flags and festoons filled the place. When a correspondent approached Gandhi for a message he said, "I am not accustomed to giving messages on such occasions." Amidst laughter he remarked: "I want to live for 125 years. But Malaviyaji cut it down by twenty-five years, when he wired to me that I must live for a hundred years."

The day commenced with prayers by the inmates of the ashram and numerous guests, after which the Tricolour was unfurled. The function had to be restricted primarily to those invited by Thakkar Bapa, the general secretary, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, as there could not be any public function owing to the official ban on public meetings and processions.

At eleven o'clock simple meals were served to the guests, Gandhi himself being present on the occasion. Then he retired to his hut for some rest. After a short siesta, he began to spin and receive the visitors. Messages of birthday greetings were pouring in. A birthday volume entitled *Gandhiji* was presented to him. Looking at the illustrations, he remarked: "Well, see the various stages through which I have passed." The most striking tribute in the book was from the pen of Albert Einstein who wrote:

"A leader of his people, unsupported by any outward authority; a politician whose success rests not upon craft, nor upon mastery of the technical devices, but simply on the convincing power of his personality; a victorious fighter, who has always scorned the use of force; a man of wisdom and humility, armed with resolve and inflexible consistency, who has devoted all his strength to the uplifting of his people and the betterment of their lot; a man who has

confronted the brutality of Europe with the dignity of the simple human being, and thus at all times risen superior. Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth."

Gandhi's seventy-fifth birthday was celebrated all over the world. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian National Army and the head of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, performed a flag salutation ceremony in Rangoon. "Father of our nation! In this holy war for India's liberation, we ask for your blessings and good wishes."

The main function at Sevagram commenced at two. As soon as Gandhi arrived, Mrs. Naidu applied *kumkum* to his forehead and garlanded him with hand-spun yarn and showered flowers on him. A large number of women and children were also present to hear Gandhi, who addressed the audience in Hindustani after cheques amounting to eighty lakhs and odd rupees were presented to him by Mrs. Naidu on behalf of the trustees of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Fund.

Gandhi explained to the audience that the gathering was not a public meeting. There was an order prohibiting general meetings without previous Government permission throughout the Wardha district. They all knew that he was a confirmed civil resister. But this was not the occasion for civil disobedience. Disobedience to be civil implied a certain procedure. This was a meeting of the trustees and the collectors of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Fund for presentation of the collection.

The secretary, in his report, had narrated to them how the idea of the fund had originated. They might like to know how he had come to be the president of the trust. The collections were started when he was in jail. The trustees had asked for his consent to nominate him as their president. After his accidental release owing to illness, they were able to consult him and he had become president for the purpose of guiding the trustees as to how the money collected should be spent in a manner befitting the memory of the late Kasturbai. The responsibility primarily rested on the trustees, but it rested on him most of all.

The money had to be spent in villages—poorer and farther away from the cities, the better. The fund had to be spent for the education and welfare of women and children only. At first, the age-limit

for male children had been fixed at twelve years. He himself had thought of raising it to sixteen. But, it was pointed out to him that in that case, the boys would get a disproportionate share, leaving the girls at a disadvantage and so their age-limit was reduced to seven years. As he had already remarked, the money was to be spent for the education of women and children. So long as he had any voice in the matter, the education would be of the basic education type. The scope of basic education included the education of the entire society, beginning with children and going up to adults and old men and women. It had to be imparted through the practice of handicrafts, village sanitation and medical relief, preventive and curative, especially with regard to deficiency diseases.

It was a tremendous work to carry out all these reforms in seven lakhs of India's villages. Seventy-five lakhs of rupees and even one crore was a trifle, compared to the vastness of the task. Seventy-five per cent of the money collected from a particular area would be spent in that area, not being towns or cities, and the remaining twenty-five per cent would go to the central fund. But the money collected from the big cities would all go to the central fund and nothing out of it would be spent in the cities. In place of the collecting committees, new committees would have to be formed to ensure proper spending of money. These committees might include some members of the collecting committees, but new names should be added. If in any place, the ways and means of spending the money satisfactorily, in accordance with the aims and objects of the fund, could not be found, the money would remain with the central fund. On the other hand, if in any place, suitable workers in adequate number could be found to carry out bigger plans satisfactorily, they would be given more money.

It was his wish that, as far as possible, money should be spent through the agency of the women workers. It was a matter of regret that the women workers with suitable qualifications were not forthcoming in sufficient numbers. The fault lay with the men, who had kept the women enslaved in domestic drudgery. They had to draw them out and push them to the fore. After all, men were not born efficient as a special creation. It rested on them to produce more and efficient women workers. Men before they became efficient workers were prone to make mistakes. Therefore, they must not expect efficiency from women, without giving them responsible

work. This fund was collected in commemoration of an old, illiterate village-minded woman. It would give peace to her departed soul if women, and especially the old women, took a leading part in the execution of the object of the memorial. The collection had been made out of an overflow of enthusiasm and affection towards the memory of the departed soul. He wanted them to see that it was spent in a way commensurate with that sentiment. That was not a task merely for the twenty-six trustees. Hundreds of workers would be needed for it. He had already said that to spend money properly was much more difficult than to collect it, unless they showed as much aptness in the former, as they had done in the latter. So long as he was with them in the flesh, he would, of course, argue with them and fight with them, but it was for them to see that their work was so carried on, as to give to the departed soul no cause for dissatisfaction.

The representatives of the Talimi Sangh met him at the end of October. There was a suggestion that the term "basic education" might be incorporated in the trust deed, so as to make it very clear to all concerned, that the education contemplated under the fund would be only of the basic type. Gandhi did not approve of this. He did not wish to put any strain upon the trustees, if any unit did not want to adopt basic education. He would leave the unit free to follow any other system approved by the board. But the Talimi Sangh should have the confidence that no one will be able to find a better system than theirs. The basic education would forge ahead through its intrinsic merit. He knew that the reform would not come by mere argumentation. It would come by ocular demonstration. If they could carry their experiment to a successful end even in one village, the battle would be half won. He was, therefore, content to go slow. It was enough that the trustees had agreed to the money being spent for the education and welfare of women and children in the villages exclusively.

"Your work," he emphasized, "is going chiefly to be among the women. I have always had a passion to serve the womankind. Ever since my arrival in India, the women have recognized in me their friend and servant. Women have come to look upon me as one of themselves. I hold radical views about the emancipation of women from their fetters which they mistake for adornment. If God wills it, I hope, one day, to place some of my own conclusions before

the public, when my researches are completed. My experience has confirmed me in the view that the real advancement of women can come only by and through their own efforts. I am, therefore, anxious that as many of women workers as possible should carry out the activities under the trust."

The second suggestion put forth by the Talimi Sangh was that the age of the boys to be covered by the scheme should be raised from seven to twelve.

Gandhi explained why he had agreed to the reduction of the age-limit for the boys from twelve to seven years. It had been brought to his notice that if there were equal facilities for the education of boys and girls, the mothers would send the boys to school but not the girls, as they would not be willing to spare them from domestic work. The result would be that the boys would get a disproportionate share of the benefit and keep out the girls. But if in any place a sufficient number of girls were not forthcoming, they could take in the boys above the age of seven on the condition that they would have to make room for girls as soon as the latter came up and that their education was paid for. The object was not to shut out boys above seven, but to prevent them from being a burden upon the Kasturba Fund. The Talimi Sangh should not fall back upon the fund designed for women. All that he was concerned about was that the fund should not be diverted to the use of boys over seven at the expense of girls.

"Is it desirable that there should be basic schools for girls exclusively, if there was not enough room for both?" asked a worker.

Gandhi had no objection. "Supposing crores of boys come to us for education, are we to refuse them for lack of accommodation? I tell you I won't. I will make them sit under the shade of a tree, if necessary, put bamboo *taklis* into their hands and begin to educate them straight away through these."

As to adult education, Gandhi observed that it had become quite clear to him that the scope of basic education had to be extended. It should include the education of everybody at every stage of life. "A basic school teacher must consider himself a universal teacher. As soon as he comes in contact with anybody, man or woman, young or old, he should say to himself, 'Now what can I give to this person?'" Will that be not superogation on his part? "No," he replied, "supposing I come across an old man who is dirty and

ignorant. His village is his universe. It would be my job to teach him cleanliness, to remove his ignorance and to widen his mental horizon. I need not tell him that I am to be his teacher. I will try to establish a living contact with his mind and win his confidence. He may reject my advances. I will not accept defeat, but continue my effort, till I succeed in making friends with him. Once that is achieved, the rest must follow." He added:

"Again, I must have my eye on the children right from their birth. I will go a step further and say that the work of the educationist begins even before that. For instance, if a woman becomes pregnant, Ashadevi will go to her and tell her: 'I am a mother as you will be. I can tell you from my experience what you should do to ensure the health of your unborn baby and your own.' She will tell the husband what his duty towards his wife is and about his share in the care of their expected baby. Thus the basic school teacher will cover the entire span of life. Naturally his activity will cover adult education.

"Some work for adult education is being done in many places. It is mostly concentrated among the mill-hands and the like in the big cities. No one has really touched the village. Mere three R's and lectures on politics will not satisfy me. The adult education of my conception must make men and women better citizens all round. To work out the syllabus and to organize the work of adult education is a more difficult task than preparation of the seven years' course for children. The common central feature of both will be the imparting of education through the village crafts. Agriculture will play an important part in the adult education under the basic scheme. Literary instruction must be there. Much information will be given orally. There will be books, more for the teachers than the taught. We must teach the majority how to behave towards the minority and vice versa. The right type of adult education should teach neighbourliness and cut at the very root of untouchability and the communal problem.

"The particular industry which is to serve as the medium of instruction will be determined by the local conditions in each place. For instance, people in a village might tell you that they are interested in agriculture, but they are not interested in the spinning wheel. In that case, you will choose the former as the medium of instruction. You could make a beginning by taking a census of its

cattle. For instance, I find that almost every one in Sevagram has a bullock and a bullock cart. It seems wasteful."

Political deadlock had created demoralization among the people. Gandhi turned their attention to the constructive programme and showed how its fulfilment alone would lead to swaraj. The following hints he issued in October:

"The workers should definitely realize that the constructive programme is the non-violent and truthful way of winning Complete Independence. Its wholesale fulfilment is Purna Swaraj. Imagine all the forty crores of people engaged in the whole of the constructive programme which is designed to build up the nation from the very bottom upward. Can anybody dispute the proposition that it must mean complete independence in every sense of the expression, including the ousting of foreign domination? When the critics laugh at the proposition, what they mean is that the forty crores of people will never co-operate in the effort to fulfil the programme. No doubt, there is considerable truth in the scoff. My answer is, it is worth the attempt. Given an indomitable will on the part of a band of earnest workers, the programme is as workable as any other and more so than most. Anyway, I have no substitute for it, if it is to be based on non-violence.

"Civil disobedience, mass or individual, is an aid to constructive effort and is a full substitute for armed revolt. Just as military training is necessary for an armed revolt, training in constructive effort is equally necessary for civil resistance. And just as the use of arms becomes necessary only when occasion demands it, even so is the use of civil resistance only occasional.

"Therefore, the workers will never be on the look-out for civil resistance. They will hold themselves in readiness, if the constructive effort is sought to be defeated. To take one or two illustrations, the effort for communal friendship cannot be defeated, but the political pacts can. But the political pacts are required because of the previous lack of friendship. Again khadi manufacture and its use cannot be defeated, if both become fairly universal. The manufacture and the use are not to be brought about by being imposed upon the people, but they have to be intelligently accepted by the people as one of the necessary items of the freedom movement, when it is worked from the villages as units. The pioneers even in such programmes can be obstructed. They have had to go through the fire

of suffering throughout the world. There is no swaraj without suffering. In violence, truth is the greatest sufferer; in non-violence truth is ever triumphant.

"If this preliminary observation has gone home to the reader, he will find the constructive programme to be full of deep interest. The programme should prove as absorbing as politics so called and the platform oratory.

"In these hints, I have singled out some items for fuller emphasis in the light of experience gained since the publication of the constructive programme.

"The kisan or the peasant, whether as a landless labourer or a labouring proprietor, comes first. He is the salt of the earth which rightly belongs or should belong to him, not to the absentee landlord or zamindar. But in the non-violent way, the labourer cannot forcibly eject the absentee landlord. He has so to work, as to make it impossible for the landlord to exploit him. Closest co-operation amongst the peasants is absolutely necessary. To this end, special organizing bodies or committees should be formed where there are none and those already in existence should be reformed wherever necessary. The kisans are for the most part illiterate. Both adults and young persons of school-going age should be educated. This applies to men and women. Where they are landless labourers, their wage should be brought to a level that would ensure a decent living which should mean balanced food and dwelling houses and clothing, which should satisfy health requirements.

"The land laws should be investigated. The peasant indebtedness offers a limitless field for research. The problem of cattle too is an integral part of agriculture in India and, therefore, it requires the attention of the workers skilled in this very intricate and somewhat baffling problem.

"Closely allied to the kisan work is labour. Here labour means industrial labour and, therefore, concentrated and centralized and much more limited in scope. Moreover, it lends itself readily to political handling. Being necessarily confined to the cities, it attracts workers more easily than kisan work. As part of the constructive programme, its primary aim is elevation of labour to its deserved status. Therefore, the labour worker's aim should be to raise the moral and the intellectual height of labour, and thus by sheer merit, to make him or her capable not merely of bettering his or

her material condition but making labour the master of the means of production instead of being the slave that it is. Capital should be labour's servant, not its master. Labour should be made conscious of its duty, from whose performance rights follow as a matter of course. In a concrete form: (*a*) Labour should have its own unions; (*b*) Education both general and scientific, of both men and women, should be regularly undertaken through night-schools; (*c*) Children of the labourers should be educated after the basic education style; (*d*) There should be a hospital and creche and a maternity home attached to every centre; (*e*) Labour should be able to support itself during the strikes. (Labour should be taught the science of conducting a successful non-violent strike.)

"All the work I have mentioned could be only done through the unions mentioned in (*a*). To my knowledge, the Ahmedabad Union is the best managed union. This does not mean that it has reached my ideal. It is trying to. If all the unions worked in the same direction, the lot of labour would be infinitely better than it is today. Labour united and morally and intellectually trained would any day be superior to capital.

"Next in importance is the student class above the age of twelve. Indeed, if we had enough workers of the right type, I would go so far as to say that we should work among them as soon as they begin learning as infants. For, they have to be taken in hand from the school-going age. I need not mention that I have not in mind their political use. For the present the schools are largely under Government control or are influenced by them. And hence, the students' education is defective in a vital matter. They are untouched by the political condition of the country, save what they learn from the newspapers or platform orators. They should have, in a systematic manner, their present education supplemented by Congress workers. How this can be fitted into the present system of education is a serious question. But it has to be tackled. Upto the matriculation standard, co-operation of parents is necessary. I adhere to the view often expressed by me that the student world should be aloof from the political turmoil. It would be different, if there was mass civil disobedience. But that is out of the question for the time being at any rate. But they should have education in national consciousness. It is the duty of an independent state to teach its citizens to be patriotic. The education imparted is by a foreign agency. It runs

contrary to the national aspirations. There should, therefore, be a body of workers, whose duty it would be to undertake the big task of taking in hand the work mentioned above. In this sense, it is a new field and it is of vital importance to us. We must recognize the fact that the students are not to be weaned from the schools and colleges. The rapidly increasing number of entrants is proof positive of it. The best course, therefore, is to supplement their studies in an orderly manner. Deliverance lies through national effort in this direction showing marked superiority over the foreign method."

With regard to work among the peasants and workers, Professor Ranga had a discussion with Gandhi.

Question: "You say that the earth rightly belongs or should belong to the peasant. If the kisans are to have only land and not the effective political power, their position will be just as bad as in Soviet Russia, where the political power has been monopolized by the proletariat dictatorship, while the peasants were first allowed to gain some holdings and later were deprived of those holdings in the name of collectivization of land."

Answer: "I do not know what has happened in Soviet Russia. But I have no doubt that if we have democratic swaraj, as it must be, if freedom is won through non-violence, the kisan must hold power in all its phases, including political power."

Question: "Am I right in interpreting your statement that the 'land should not belong to the absentee landlord or the zamindar' and that ultimately the zamindari system has to be abolished, of course, through non-violent means?"

Answer: "Yes. But you should remember that I visualize a system of trusteeship regulated by the state. In other words, I do not want to antagonize the zamindars—and for that matter any class—without cause."

Question: "When you say that a peasant has 'so to work as to make it impossible for the landlord to exploit him', does it include apart from the satyagrahic campaigns the legislative administrative reforms that the peasants may oblige the state through the exercise of their franchise and minimize the powers of the landlords?"

Answer: "Civil Disobedience and non-co-operation are designed for use, when people, the tillers of the soil, have no political power. But immediately they have political power, naturally their character will be ameliorated through legislative channels.

" 'But the kisan might not have all that political power,' you will perhaps say. My reply is that if swaraj is attained by the effort of the whole people, as it must be under non-violence, the kisans must come into their own and have the uppermost voice. But if it is not so and there is a sort of a workable compromise between the people and the government on the basis of a limited franchise, the interests of the tiller of the soil will need close watching. If the legislature proves itself to be incapable of safeguarding the kisan's interests, they will, of course, always have the sovereign remedy of civil disobedience and non-co-operation.

"But as I said as early as 1932, in connection with Chirala Perala, ultimately, it is not the paper legislation nor brave words or fiery speeches, but the power of non-violent organization, discipline and sacrifice that constitutes the real bulwark of the people against injustice or oppression."

Question: "You suggested that the existing kisan organizations should be reformed where necessary. I quite recognize the need for Congressmen, who have been working among the kisans, to reorient the general political attitude of the kisan class organizations so that they will recognize the need for a united political freedom. I am also convinced that the Congress provides for us all, especially for the peasants, the most effective weapon and leadership to win freedom. But is there any harm if we organize the peasants into a Kisan Congress which accepts the political leadership of Congress?"

Answer: "There may be gross self-deception in this presentation. When I said that the kisan sabhas should be reformed, I meant that up till now the kisan sabhas have been formed not to wrest power from the Government but to capture the Congress. That applies to the students and other organizations too."

Question: "You are partially right. That was so in the past. But we have now completely abandoned the idea. We have adopted the word Congress not in a spirit of rivalry, but because we want to be identified with the Congress. We will have the double membership. Every member of the Kisan Congress will also be enrolled as a member of the National Congress."

Answer: "Then why not run the Congress? Why set up an independent and parallel organization? Do you not see when the kisan sabhas are bona fide organizations they are the Congress? Today only a fraction of India's population is represented on the Congress

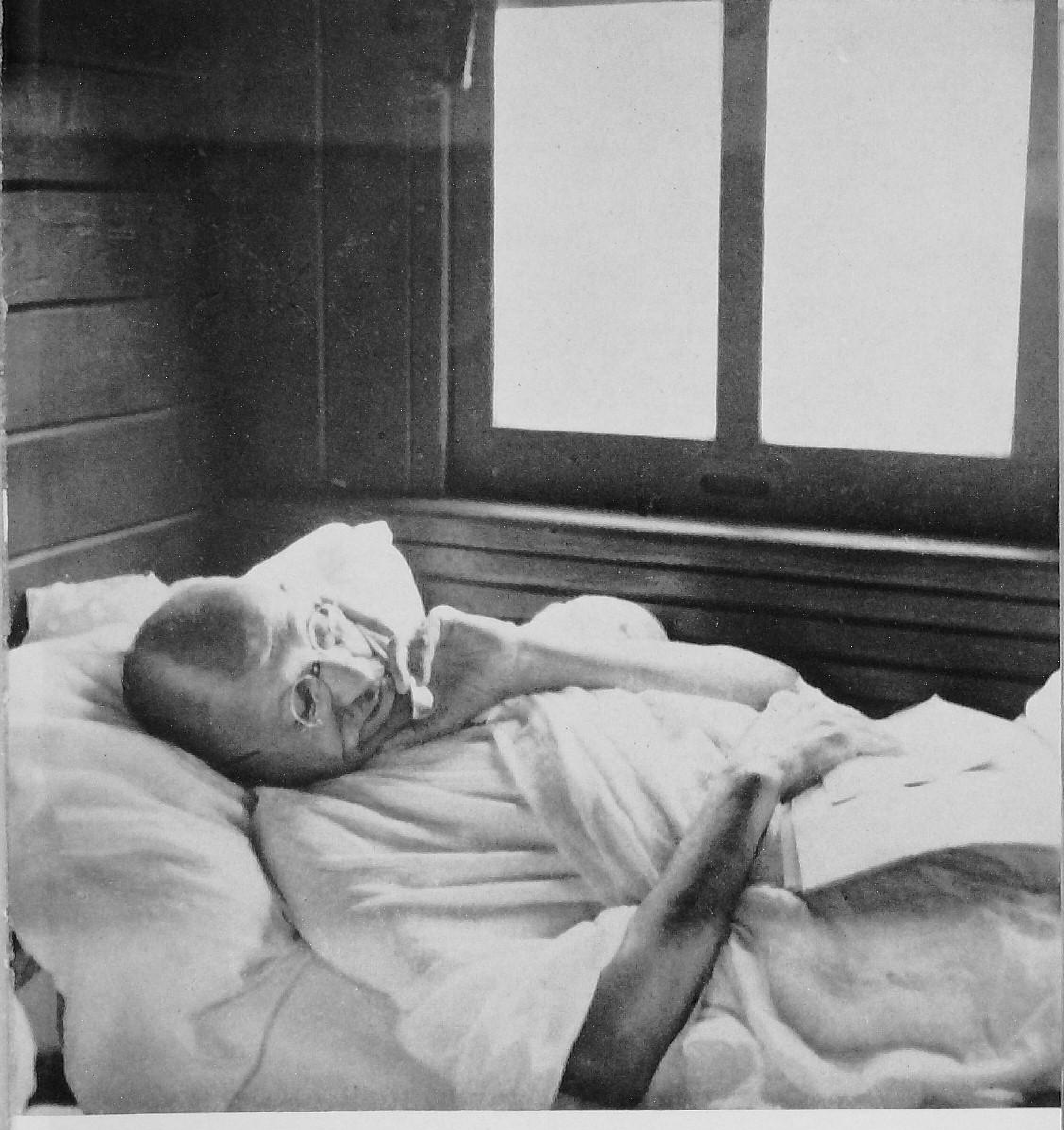
register. The Congress aspires to represent the whole nation, even for those who are not on its register. When it becomes a fully national organization *de jure*, as it is today by moral right, the bulk of its membership will naturally consist of the kisans and they will be in a position to dictate its policy."

Question: "The trouble is that some of our Congress colleagues think we are ousting them from their legitimate position of power and privilege. They may not be prepared to welcome our existence or trust our bona fides. We want to avoid all conflicts within the Congress by willingly accepting the political leadership of the Congress. For, excluding our economic programme, we want to have separate class-conscious organization which will derive power both for itself and the Congress from its contact with the masses. Unless we do that, others will come and confuse the kisans."

Answer: "But here you have involved yourself in a fallacy. You should work to make the Congress fully representative of the kisans. Unless we get down to this fundamental thing and work from the bottom upward, there will be no swaraj. Every Congressman must make up his mind to make the Congress an honest organization and, therefore, a kisan organization. As for the rights, they should follow as a natural corollary from the performance of service. Else there is only usurpation."

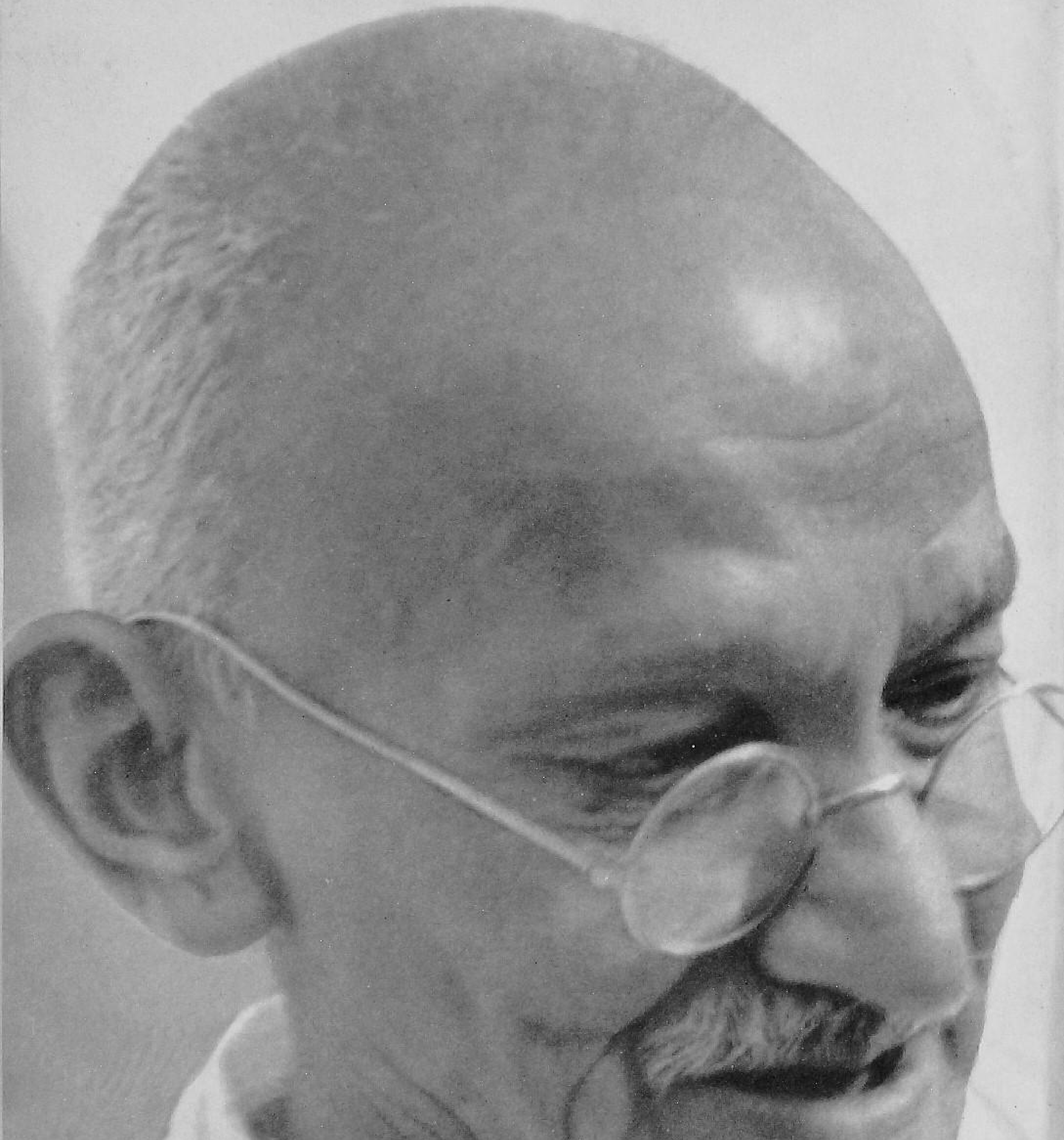
Question: "You have tried for the last twenty-five years to rebuild the Congress organization and you know the result. I must confess we have not got confidence that we shall be able to so behave and act that the Congress will in the end become a kisan organization. Our fear is that by following your line of action in spite of ourselves, we shall allow ourselves to be exploited by the vested interests. The very fact that the Birlas and their like are today prepared to give you shelter and you accept it from them prevents radical reform. Therefore, though I shall feel the wrench, I shall feel unable to work on your lines."

Answer: "Then you admit that whilst you will work under the aegis of the Congress, you will at the same time run a parallel, independent organization. My mind runs in a straight line. I do not understand this zigzag course. This can only lead to trouble, when the Congress becomes an effective organization. I am thinking of millions of our downtrodden countrymen who do not know what to hope and what not to hope. A parallel organization will only further



Photograph : Kanu Gandhi

On the way to Wardha, September 1944

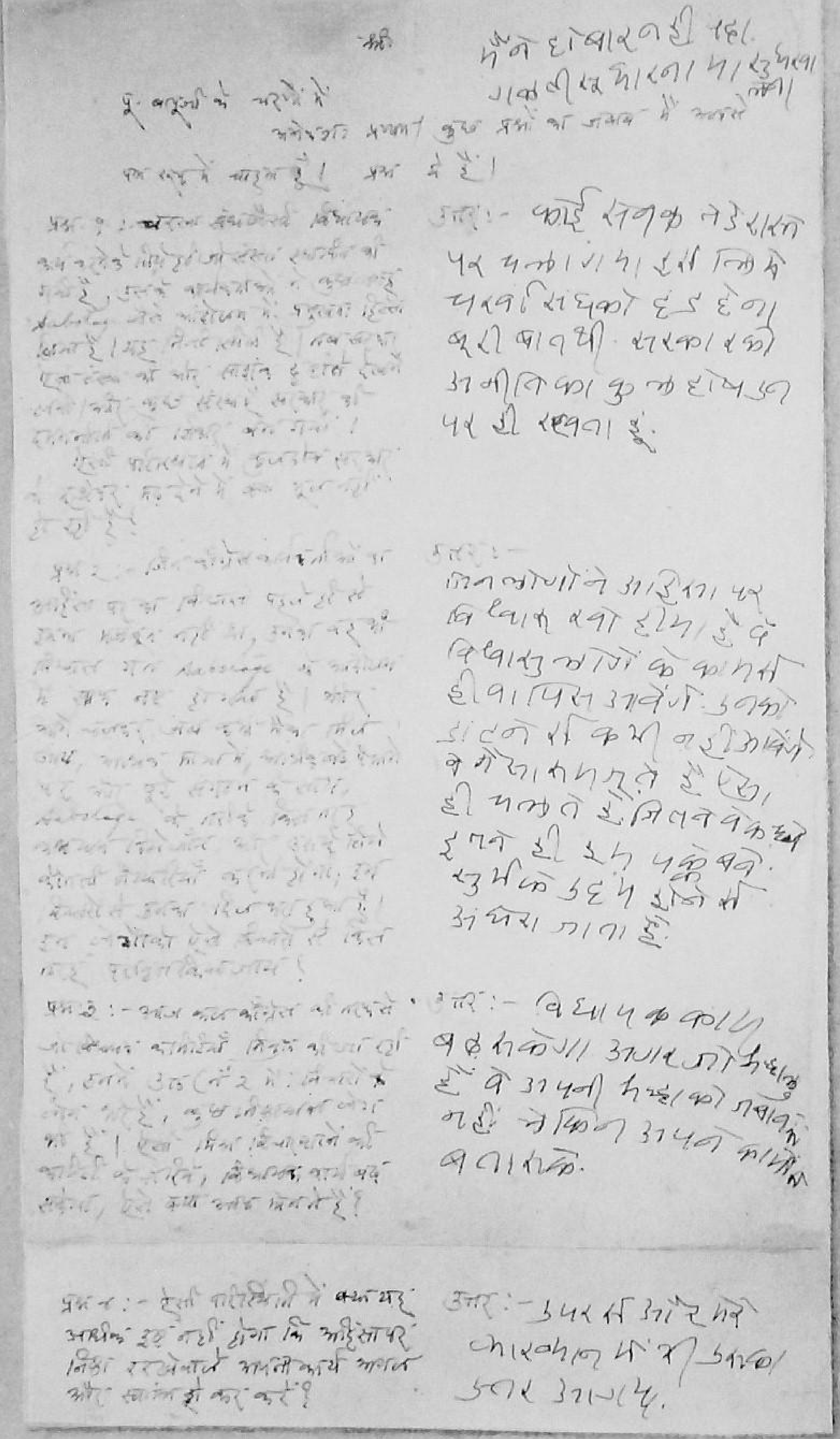


Photograph : M. Desai

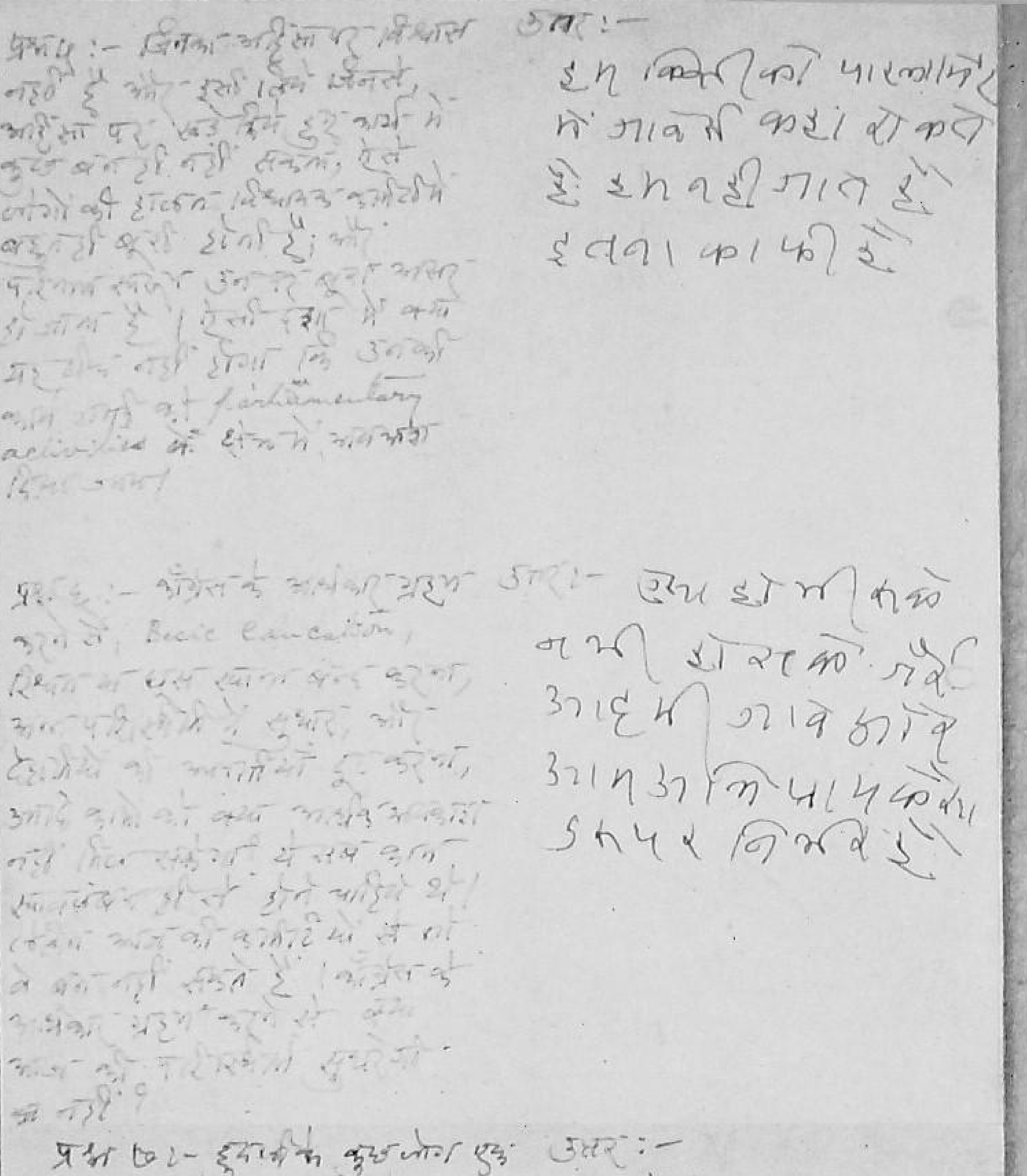
Gandhi aged 75

Photograph : Udit Gopal

Gandhi accepting a cheque for eighty lakhs and odd rupees for the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Fund, Sevagram, October 2, 1944



Gandhi's replies to questions put by


प्रश्न ५ :- जिनका अहिंसा पर विश्वास नहीं है और इसी लिये जिनसे, अहिंसा पर खड़े किये हुए कार्य में कुछ बन ही नहीं सकता, ऐसे लोगों की हालत विधायक कार्यों में बहुत ही बुरी होती है। और परिणाम स्वरूप उनका कुछ [illegible] हो जाता है। ऐसी दशा में क्या यह ठीक नहीं होगा कि उनकी [illegible] parliamentary activities के क्षेत्र में [illegible] किया जाय।

उत्तर :- इन किसीको पारलामेंटमें जानेसे कहां रोक सकते हैं? हम नहीं जाते हैं इतना काफी है।

प्रश्न ६ :- कांग्रेस के अधिकार ग्रहण करने से, Basic Education, [illegible] और देहातियों को [illegible] दूर करना, आदि कामों को क्या [illegible] नहीं मिल सकेगी? ये सब काम स्वतंत्र रूप से होने चाहिये थे। लेकिन आज की परिस्थिति में वे बन नहीं सकते हैं। कांग्रेस के अधिकार ग्रहण करने से क्या [illegible] सुधरेगी या नहीं?

उत्तर :- कुछ हो भी सकते न भी हो सकते। जैसे आदमी जावे और [illegible] उनपर निर्भर है।

प्रश्न ७ :- हुदलीके कुछ लोग एक कंपनी बनाकर हुदलीमें एक ऑइल एंजीन लाकर इलेक्ट्रीसीटी की व्यवस्था कराना चाहते हैं। इलेक्ट्रीसीटी पर कुछ धंधे वहां शुरू करने का उनका आज तो विचार नहीं है। देहात में और खासकर हुदली में इलेक्ट्रीसीटी लाने के लिये क्या मैं अनुकूल राय दे सकता हूं? और उनको मदद दे सकता हूं?

उत्तर :- मैं तो इसका सख्त विरोधी हूं।

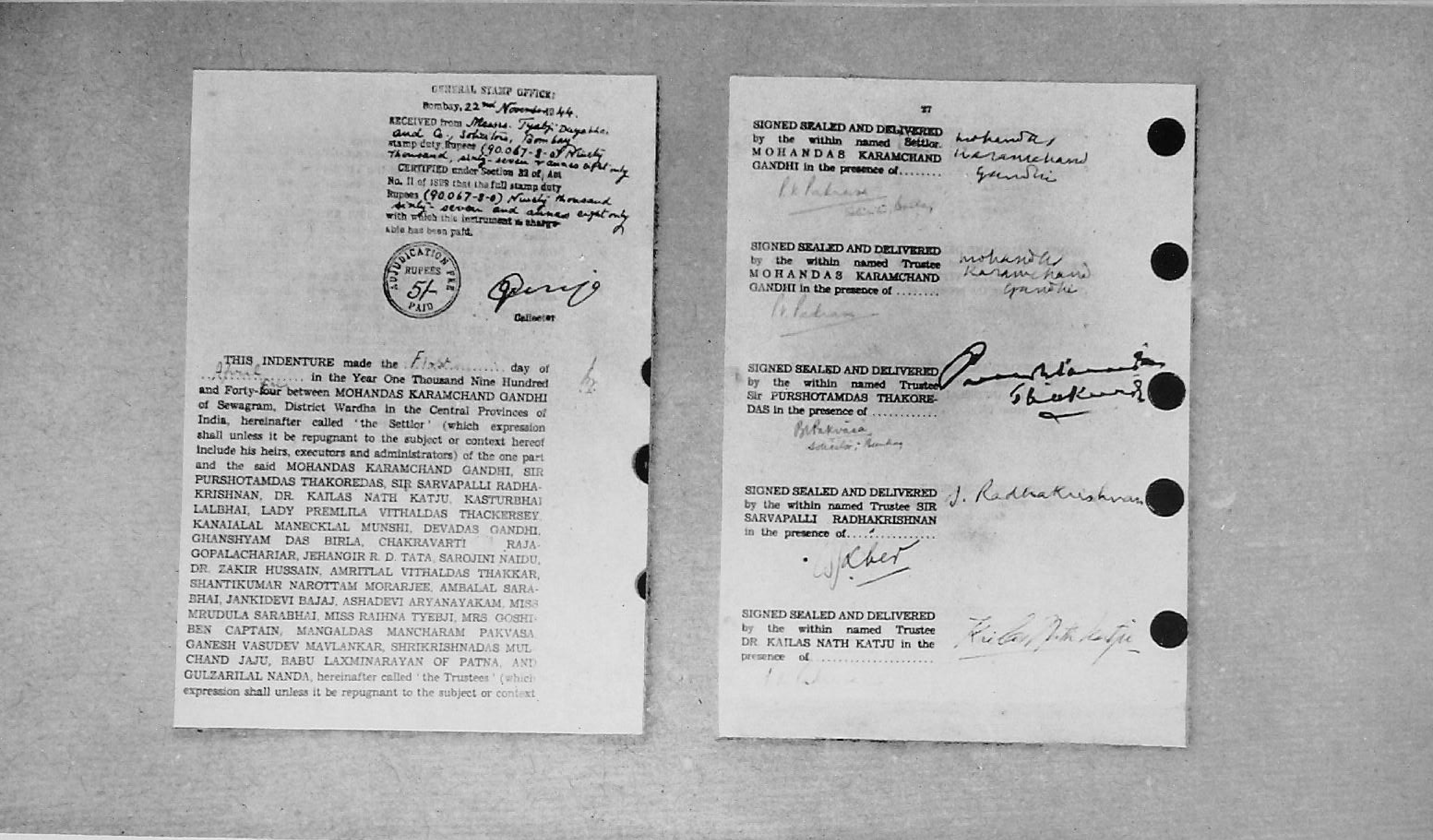
2-3-45
सेवाग्राम.

आपका विनीत:
पुंडलीक कातगडे.

मेरे [illegible] बता सकते हैं।
२५-३-४५

Courtesy : Pundalik Katgade

Pundalik Katgade, Sevagram, March 2, 1945



GENERAL STAMP OFFICE:

Bombay, 22nd November 1944.

RECEIVED from Messrs. Tyabji Dayabhai and Co., Solicitors, Bombay stamp duty Rupees (90,067-8-0) Ninety Thousand, sixty-seven and annas eight only

CERTIFIED under Section 32 of, Act No. II of 1899 that the full stamp duty Rupees (90,067-8-0) Ninety thousand sixty-seven and annas eight only with which this instrument is chargeable has been paid.

ADJUDICATION FEE RUPEES 5/- PAID

Collector

THIS INDENTURE made the First day of April in the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Forty-four between MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI of Sewagram, District Wardha in the Central Provinces of India, hereinafter called 'the Settlor' (which expression shall unless it be repugnant to the subject or context hereof include his heirs, executors and administrators) of the one part and the said MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI, SIR PURSHOTAMDAS THAKOREDAS, SIR SARVAPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN, DR. KAILAS NATH KATJU, KASTURBHAI LALBHAI, LADY PREMLILA VITHALDAS THACKERSEY, KANAIALAL MANECKLAL MUNSHI, DEVADAS GANDHI, GHANSHYAM DAS BIRLA, CHAKRAVARTI RAJAGOPALACHARIAR, JEHANGIR R. D. TATA, SAROJINI NAIDU, DR. ZAKIR HUSSAIN, AMRITLAL VITHALDAS THAKKAR, SHANTIKUMAR NAROTTAM MORARJEE, AMBALAL SARABHAI, JANKIDEVI BAJAJ, ASHADEVI ARYANAYAKAM, MISS MRUDULA SARABHAI, MISS RAIHNA TYEBJI, MRS GOSHIBEN CAPTAIN, MANGALDAS MANCHARAM PAKVASA, GANESH VASUDEV MAVLANKAR, SHRIKRISHNADAS MULCHAND JAJU, BABU LAXMINARAYAN OF PATNA, AND GULZARILAL NANDA, hereinafter called 'the Trustees' (which expression shall unless it be repugnant to the subject or context

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SIGNED SEALED AND DELIVERED by the within named Settlor MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI in the presence of........ Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

SIGNED SEALED AND DELIVERED by the within named Trustee MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI in the presence of .... Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

SIGNED SEALED AND DELIVERED by the within named Trustee Sir PURSHOTAMDAS THAKOREDAS in the presence of .... Purshotamdas Thakurdas

SIGNED SEALED AND DELIVERED by the within named Trustee SIR SARVAPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN in the presence of............... S. Radhakrishnan

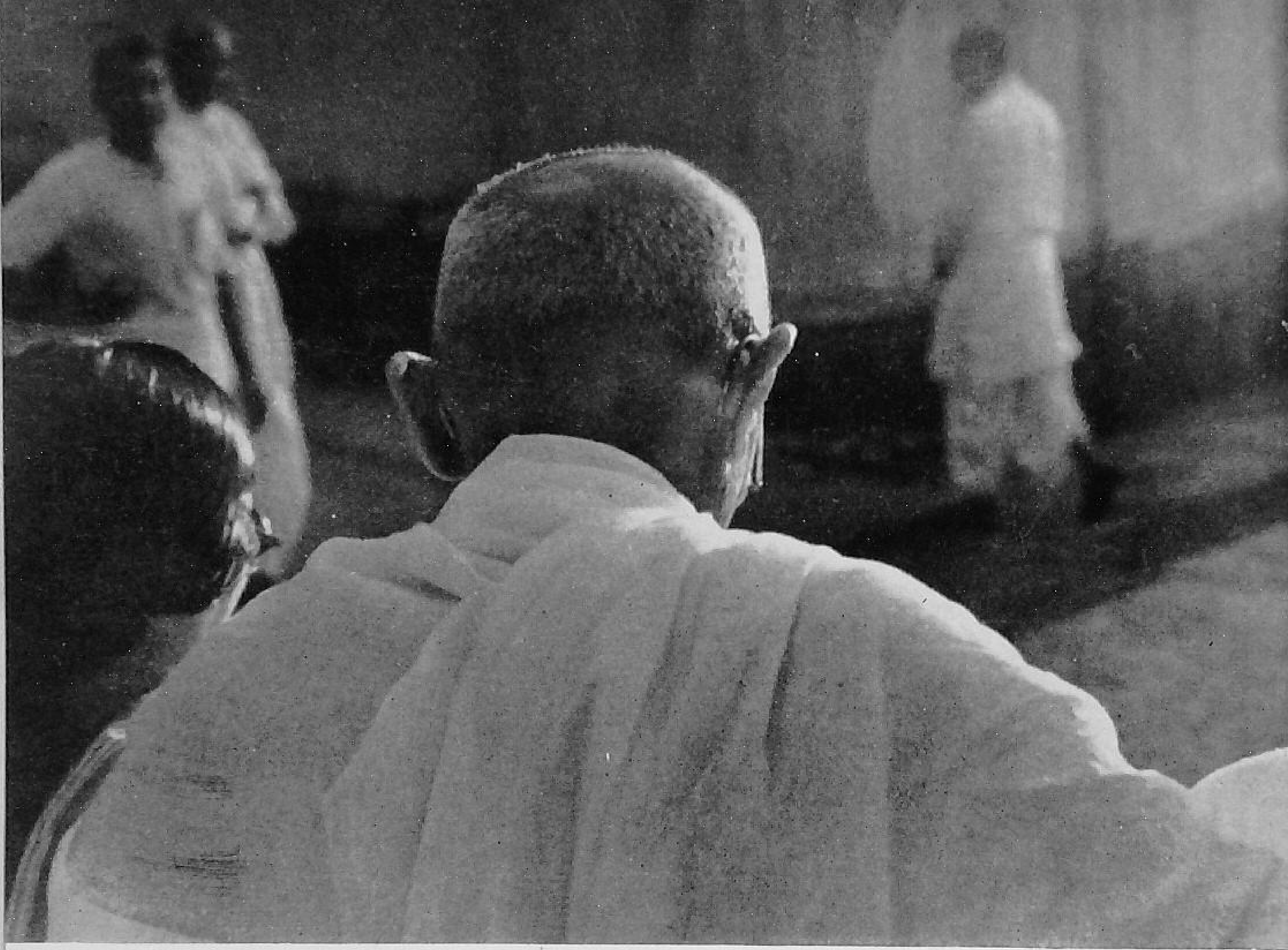
SIGNED SEALED AND DELIVERED by the within named Trustee DR KAILAS NATH KATJU in the presence of .... Kailas Nath Katju

Courtesy : Mangaldas Pakvasa

Pages from the trust deed of the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, April 1, 1945

Photographs : D. R. D. Wadia

Gandhi's visit to the first workers' training camp conducted under the auspices of the Kasturba Memorial Trust, Borivli, Bombay, April 11, 1945



Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

Inspecting the camp

Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

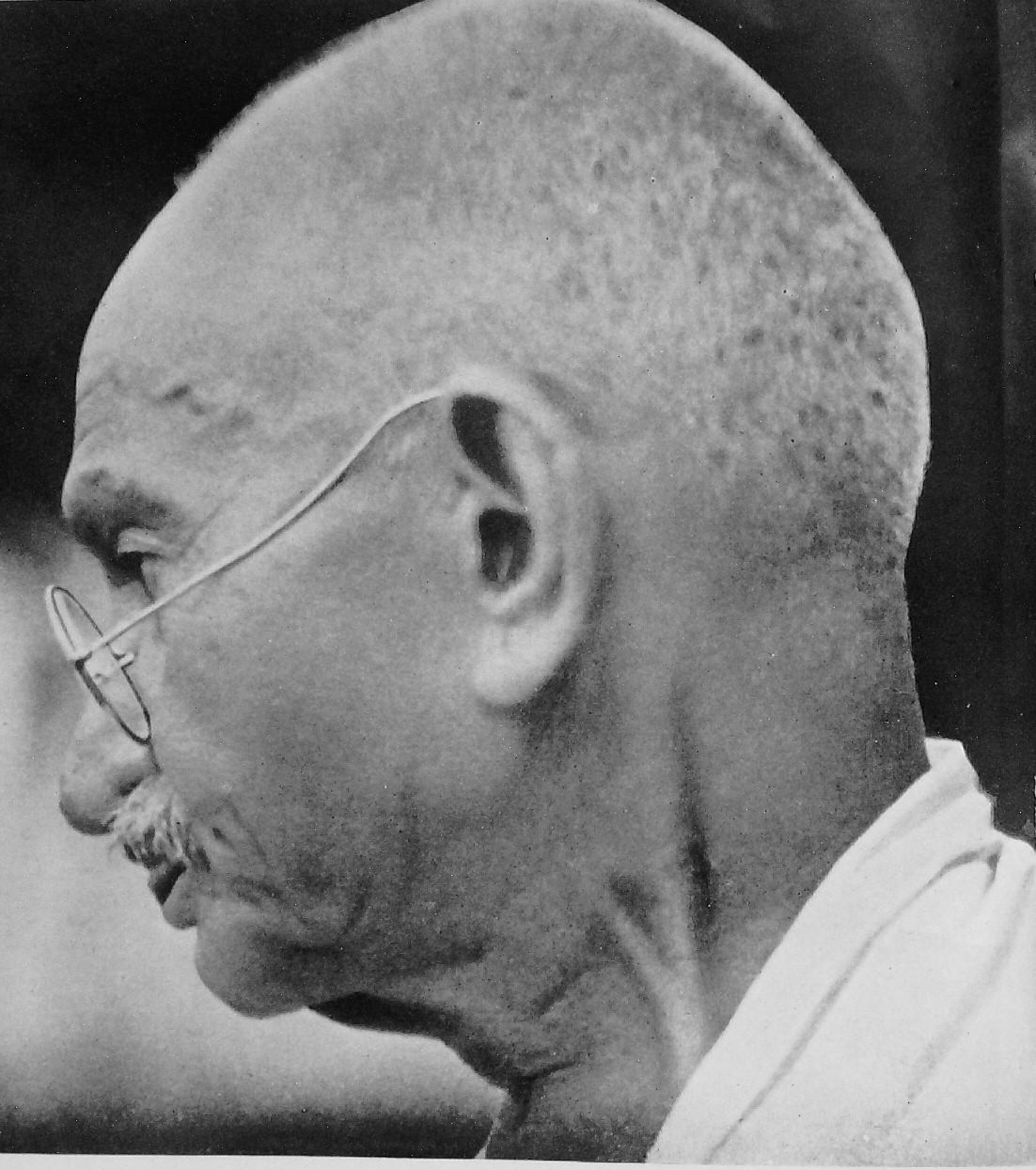
Gandhi addressing the workers at the camp

Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

Gandhi jotting down the questions put by the women workers

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi's visit to the Kasturba National Memorial Trust office at Scindia House, Bombay, April 13, 1945



Photograph : D. R. D. Wadia

Gandhi, 1945

confuse their minds. It would be more logical to keep out of the Congress altogether."

Question: "We enter the Congress, but we do not fight for position and power. Can you not treat us on the same footing as the Ahmedabad Labour Union?"

Answer: "Well, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It will all depend on the spirit in which this is done. I have expressed my apprehension already. And now it is for you to remove it. You can model your organization after the Ahmedabad Labour Union. All the Labour Union members are on the Congress register. They are under the discipline of the Congress. Yet they are a power in the Congress and in the municipality. You should confine yourself to Andhra alone. All kisans should be automatically on your register. But the purpose of this enrolment should be educative, to make the kisans Congress-minded and politically conscious."

Question: "The Bombay A.-I.C.C. resolution assures the masses that the power in the national government and swaraj India ought to belong to the toilers in the fields, in the factories and elsewhere. Can we say that the spirit of the resolution means that the Congress stands for the achievement of democratic Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja-Raj, after the attainment of swaraj?"

Answer: "Not only after, but before also. The Congress stands for democratic Kisan-Mazdoor-Praja-Raj."

On November 19, the All-India Basic Education training camp was opened at Sevagram. The proceedings began with a short prayer when the verses from the Upanishads and the Koran were recited. Addressing the students, Gandhi explained the significance of the basic education whose correct name, he said, was Nayee Talim or New Education. This education was no longer distracted within the limits of seven years from seven to fourteen, but as an education for life through rural handicrafts.

Referring to the prayer which had been recited at the beginning of the proceedings, he said:

"There are several things in this prayer which are worthy of your note, but I want to draw your attention to that particular portion of it which pledged the reciter to adherence to truth in speech and action under all circumstances and at all times. One mantra means 'Lead me from Untruth to Truth, from Darkness to Light, from Death to Immortality.' Similarly the Islamic prayer, which has just

been recited, is an outpouring of the soul for light and for being guided on to the straight path of truth and righteousness. This quest for truth is the alpha and omega of all education.

"After finishing your training here, you will go back to your respective provinces to propagate this New Education. You will keep this ideal of devotion to truth before you.

"Your work will be that of the pioneers. There will be no one to help or to guide you with his previous experience. You shall have to grope your way all by yourselves. It is, therefore, not an easy task that you have before you. Then, this New Education will not help you to get the big jobs carrying high salaries and emoluments. But yours will be the privilege to go among and serve the villagers in their villages. The palatial buildings and costly equipment can, therefore, have no place in your scheme of work. The school of my conception is one where the classes are held in the open under the shade of a tree. I know that it cannot be realized at present. Some shelter will be necessary, perhaps always, for protection against the sun, wind and rain. True education can only be given under conditions of utmost simplicity."

Pointing to the building in which they were assembled, Gandhi observed:

"All the buildings here in the Talimi Sangh are built of local material and with the help of the local artisans. We have thereby established a living link between ourselves and the people. That by itself is an education for the people and constitutes the foundation of our future educational work.

"If you thoroughly assimilate this ideal of simplicity and its importance in the New Education, you will have justified your training here. You will then appreciate your work.

"That work consists of cleaning up. Cleanliness of the mind and body is the first step in education. Prayer does for the purification of the mind, what the bucket and the broom do for the cleaning up our physical surroundings. That is why we always commence our proceedings with prayer. No matter whether the prayer we recite is the Hindu prayer or the Muslim or the Parsi, its function is essentially the same, namely, the purification of the heart. God has innumerable names but the most beautiful and suitable, in my opinion, is Truth. Let Truth, therefore, rule every action of our life be it ever so insignificant. Let every morsel of food that we eat be

sanctified with His name and consecrated to His service. Not only will it make our bodies and minds healthy and clean, but the inner cleanliness will be reflected in our surroundings also. We must learn to make our latrine as clean as our kitchens.

"As with the individual, so with the society. A village is but a group of individuals, and the world, as I see it, is one vast village, and mankind one family. The various functions in the human body have then parallel in the corporate life of society. What I have said about the inner and outer cleanliness of the individual, therefore, applies to the whole society.

In the mighty world, man considered as an animal occupies but an insignificant place. Physically, man is a contemptible worm. But God has endowed him with intellect and with the faculty of discrimination between good and evil. If we use this faculty to know God, we become a power for good. Abuse of that talent converts us into an instrument of evil, so that we become like scourge and a plague and fill this earth with strife and bloodshed and unhappiness and misery.

"The struggle between the forces of good and evil is ceaseless and eternal. The former have truth and ahimsa as weapons against the latter's falsehood, violence and brute force. There is nothing more potent in the universe than God's name. If we enthrone Him in our hearts and keep Him there always, we shall know no fear and lay for ourselves rich treasure in life."

Gandhi was overworking himself and there was fear of a breakdown. He issued a statement saying that, for a month, he would rigidly discontinue all public activities:

"That 'Man proposes and God disposes' constantly proves true in my case, as I expect it does in every case, whether we realize it or not. I was contemplating a food fast for reasons I hold to me entirely spiritual. But for the time being, it is being replaced by a day-to-day work fast.

"I had hoped that I had recovered sufficiently to be able to go through the routine work without interruption, but nature's warning has been sounding in my ears during the last ten days. I was feeling fatigued. Even after the noon day siesta, the brain seemed tired. There was a complete disinclination to speak or write. But I continued hoping that I would be all right without having to discontinue mental activity. But nature would have her way.

"From the 4th to the 31st of December I have decided rigidly to discontinue all public activities, all interviews for public or private purposes and all correspondence of any nature whatsoever. I shall read no newspapers during the period. This abstention will be subject to exception for unforeseen circumstances of grave nature.

"I shall not deny myself the pleasure of reading the non-political literature in which I am interested. This also I shall read without in any way unduly taxing the brain. I have asked the friends, who were expecting to see me during the month, to indulgently postpone their visits for the time being.

"Let the readers not be alarmed at what is only a precautionary measure. There is nothing physically wrong with me, except that my old friends, the hookworms and the amoebia, have not left me. The starvation of millions, black markets, and what I cannot but describe as gambling, will continue to worry me as they do now. I can but entreat my numerous co-workers to do what they can to ease the situation which can be done, I am perfectly sure, if those concerned will make up their minds that the claims of famishing millions are the first charge on their care and attention."

The year 1945 opened with Mr. Amery's refusal to consider the release of the Congress leaders. "A satyagrahi in prison never rots," said Gandhi. "He serves his cause by his imprisonment, but it is the duty of those who are outside not to forget those who are in prison." He put all the stress on the constructive programme and resumed his work after a month's complete rest, although he was still far from well.

On January 11, 1945, the work of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh Conference began at Sevagram. Before sunrise, Gandhi entered the hall packed with more than 200 educationists from all over India. He was still observing silence during the day and so wrote a short speech in Hindustani which was read out by Dr. Zakir Husain:

"I had hoped to speak a few words while opening the conference but God had willed it otherwise. I had to take silence on account of cough, etc. Therefore, I have written down what I wanted to say.

"Although we have been working for the Nayee Talim all these years, we have so far been, as it were, sailing in inland sea. We have now to leave this comparative safety and push out into the open sea, so far as our course was mapped out. We have now before us the unchartered waters with the Polar star as our only guide and

protection; that Polar star is the village handicrafts. Our sphere of work now is not confined to Nayee Talim, to children from seven to fourteen years. It is to cover the whole life, from the moment of conception to the moment of death. This means that our work will have increased tremendously; yet the workers remain the same. But that should not worry us; our guide and companion is Truth which is God. He will never betray us, but Truth will be our help only if we stand by it regardless of everything. There can be in it no room for hypocrisy, camouflage, pride, attachment or anger.

"We have to become the teachers of the villagers, that is to say, we have to become their servants in true sense. Our compensation, if any, has to come from within and not from without. It should make no difference to us whether in our quest for truth we have any human company or not. Nor does the Nayee Talim depend on the outside financial help; it must pay its way. Whatever the critics might say, I know that the true education must be self-supporting. There is nothing to feel ashamed of in this. It may be a novel idea. If we can make good our claim and demonstrate that ours is the only method for true development of mind, those who scoff at the Nayee Talim today will become its ardent admirers in the end and the Nayee Talim will find the universal acceptance. Seven lakhs of our villages which are today the symbol of our poverty in every sense ought to become prosperous in the real sense. This prosperity will not come from outside; it will grow from the villages as a result of labour of every villager. Whether this is a mere dream or a practical reality, this is the goal of Nayee Talim and nothing short of it. May God and Truth help us to realize it.

"I have gone through the balance sheet of the Talimi Sangh. It shows that whatever we have spent has been spent with due care and consideration. It is a brief document. I hope every one will go through it carefully.

"The question of language as such does not fall within the scope of Nayee Talim, but the question of the medium of instruction does and that must always be the mother tongue. This point cannot be over-emphasized.

"Equally important is the question of the national or all-India language. It can never be English, which is undoubtedly the language of the foreigners and international commerce, but Hindustani alone can be the national language. At present, it has two forms.

In order to understand both the forms of the national language, Hindi and Urdu, and for their natural synthesis, we must learn the Devanagari and Persian scripts. I find it lacking even in my immediate surroundings. All our signboards must be written in both the scripts and there should be none amongst us who cannot easily read and write either.

"I want to draw your attention also to another thing. I consider the Sevagram centre to be an ideal centre for conducting central experiment in Nayee Talim, as it is here that the Charkha Sangh is carrying out its main experiments. Wardha is the centre for other village industries, and experiments for the improvement of cattle, which is cow service in true sense, are also being conducted here. And Sevagram does not stand alone. There are twenty villages lying about it in close proximity. Therefore, if an experiment in Nayee Talim can be carried out in its most natural form anywhere, it is here. Various institutions mentioned above are not rival organizations. They are complementary and are calculated to supplement one another's effort. That is the hallmark of love and unity."

Side by side with the basic education conference, village workers' training camp was opened near Sevagram. Gandhi had "no preference for a militant programme", such as the procession even for Independence Day. On January 26, the ashram inmates of Sevagram took the independence pledge taken by Gandhi in 1943—during his detention in Aga Khan Palace:

"My immediate objective is, and for years has been, for India to gain her independence, complete in every sense of the term, by truthful and non-violent means. And in prosecution of that objective, I re-pledge myself on this Independence Day not to rest till it is gained. I seek for the fulfilment of my pledge that divine unseen power, which we recognize by such familiar name as God, Allah and Paramatma."

After the evening prayer, Gandhi addressed the workers. He had said that he did not want a militant programme. But if any one interfered with the execution of the constructive work, he expected the people to die rather than turn back. Such an occasion had arisen that very morning. A *safai* batch—cleaners—was marching mutely with the pickaxes and shovels, broom-sticks and baskets. These were not fighting implements. Yet the police stopped them. The police would allow them to proceed only if they broke up the line. In such

circumstances, their non-violence would be sheer cowardice if they yielded. And they would not be true to the independence pledge repeated year after year.

Their hymn for the evening, Gandhi observed, was accidentally appropriate. Its central theme was that true happiness lay only in the womb of unhappiness. For the audience it meant true happiness if swaraj came only through unhappiness, that is, self-suffering. So they did the right thing in refusing to break the line and at the same time not breaking through the police cordon. The police had their fire-arms. But they were rendered useless before the dignified and yet the firm attitude of the volunteers. If the people had lost their temper, if they had tried to break through the police cordon, the police would probably have resorted to firing. They were not to invite firing, nor were they to avoid it. They could not flinch. For them the real authority was the dictates of their hearts which he would call—God or Truth. Hence for him true independence was convertible with God.

Tilak Maharaj had given the mantra "swaraj is our birthright!" It was a simple mantra. The way of realizing the mantra was truth and non-violence. Gandhi claimed that was possible for the millions if they practised the constructive programme.

On February 15, Gandhi addressed some 150 workers interested in the Kasturba Memorial work. He spoke for about fifteen minutes, at the end of which he invited questions and also appealed to the workers to spare him as far as possible, as his energy now was limited. He had been observing silence these days practically for the whole day from 8.15 a.m. to 8.15 p.m. He broke it only for a short time during the meeting days.

Referring to the amount of one crore and twenty-four lakhs that had been collected, Gandhi remarked that though he was impatient to speed up the work, he was not going to allow the fund to be squandered away or to be loosely handled. It had been collected in the name of an illiterate and simple-hearted woman. The work done in her memory must be cent per cent honest. He did not care for the number of workers. If he could find even two capable men or women in the meeting, he would begin work with their help and expand it as more suitable workers came forward.

So far as he was concerned, he would like to exclude men altogether from the various provincial committees formed under the

trust and fill them all with women, but he would not have them unless they were at least as capable, if not better than, men. Otherwise he would be exploiting them.

One crore and twenty-four lakhs was a mere drop in the ocean when distributed among seven lakhs of India's villages. India was spending more than a crore a day on the war, but one crore and twenty-four lakhs for the service of women and children appeared a big sum in the eyes of everybody that gave only a measure of the topsyturvydom to which they had got used.

Referring to the way in which the money was to be spent, he divided it into three heads. First in order was the medical relief for the women and children in the villages. From the schemes that had come, everybody seemed to think in terms of maternity homes and free hospitals for women and children. He recognized the need of this kind of work, but he frankly confessed that he had yet to feel his way to it. What kind of medical institutions they were to have and what system of medicine they were to adopt was, no doubt, a ticklish question. It was taxing his mind and he requested them all to give their serious attention to it. But so far as he was concerned, "prevention is better than cure" was his motto. If he had his way, he would make sanitation and hygiene work the principal activity. Under this head it did not matter if, in doing so, they had to exclude a certain class of hard and difficult cases. Some of the patients might even die. He could steel his heart to their loss, but it broke his heart to see even one healthy man fall sick. Our villagers must be taught to look after their health. The root causes were poverty and ignorance. In order of importance these two came first.

Education was to be along the lines of Nayee Talim. As a matter of fact, everything else was included in and was an essential part of Nayee Talim, as he conceived its scope.

They had to better their economic condition through khadi and village industries. Today, the sole occupation of a woman amongst us was supposed to be to bear children, to look after her husband and otherwise to drudge for the household. This was a shame. Not only was the woman condemned to domestic slavery, but when she went out as a labourer to earn wages, though she worked harder than men, she was paid less.

The children were forced to go to work at an early age. Some of them worked often as much as the men, but they were paid even less

than women. This state of affairs must be put an end to. He had received no scheme for this kind of work. So far, the children in the villages began to earn at an early age, their parents could not afford to send them to school and spend on their education like the city folk. Their education should fit them for some useful industry or the other and it should help to put them on their legs.

The work outlined by him was original and difficult. Indeed, very few men were there fit to carry it out. Many even lacked the desire to train themselves for it. Such men should not come on Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Fund committees and if they were on them already, they should resign and make way for others.

At the end of Gandhi's speech, a worker asked what should be considered the maximum population of a village. He replied that for the present he would set the outside limit at two thousand. But this was subject to adjustments later on. He knew an overwhelming majority of villages in India had a population between five hundred and thousand or even less. He would like them to begin with the smallest village and then work upwards. He knew of some villages in Gujarat which were miniature towns. The rich folk had gone and settled there with their wealth. The money of the fund was not to be spent on such villages.

More questions then followed.

Question: "What means would you suggest for the economic uplift of the villages?"

Answer: "True all round uplift of the villages cannot but result in their economic betterment. Except the maternity work, all the other items outlined by me would directly result in their economic uplift as well."

Question: "If you were in charge of a district, how would you set about the work?"

Answer: "A district is too big a bite for me. If I can organize work successfully in one village, I would be satisfied. It will serve as a model for the rest of the seven lakhs of villages to follow. We have not set about village work in right earnest so far. We have only tinkered with it here and there amateurishly. I myself was an amateur, but now we are determined to do better."

Question: "Some engage in the constructive work only as a side line to their political work. The result is that they can do justice to neither. There should be proper supervision to prevent it."

Answer: "I entirely agree that the constructive work and political work should not be mixed up. To me, the constructive work properly done is sufficient. It leaves no necessity for any other programme. As for the supervision, there is the old man who is your secretary and the young woman, the organizing secretary of the trust. I mean Thakkar Bapa and Mridulabehn."

Question: "Today the provincial committees have an overwhelming majority of men. In how much time do you hope to be able to replace them by women?"

Answer: "I would, if I could turn out all the men today and myself follow suit, but I would take women on their merit, not merely because they are women. If we could find suitable workers, I would certainly wish to spend the money in our hands fairly fast. Anyway I hope and expect that by the time the present fund is expended, women have become capable of managing their own affairs."

Question: "But if you do not find suitable women workers, why should not the fund be used to train them up?"

Answer: "That is exactly our object and it is for that very purpose that you are all here now. But everything must be done in a way befitting the memory of her in whose name the fund has been collected."

Question: "What is to be done in a province like Sind, where it is unsafe for a woman to venture out and work in villages?"

Answer: "So long as the women do not come forward, it goes without saying that men have to work in their place, but I have no doubt that you should be able to find women to go to work in the villages. The Muslim women, at any rate, should have nothing to fear in Sind. Anyway the worst that can happen to a woman is that she might lose her life. I am convinced that no one can molest a woman if she has the determination and the will to resist and is not afraid of dying. I know of a young missionary girl who went all alone in the midst of the Negroes in the wilds of Africa. Yet she was not afraid and no one ever cast an evil eye on her. We have such women amongst us also. One of them was with me only two days ago. She went to Dacca all alone when Hindus and Muslims had run amuck. No one dared to touch her.

"To enable women to shed their cowardice and to face danger undaunted, should in fact be one of the results of our activity under the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Fund scheme."

Question: "If we take up work just in one village, the pressure of the surrounding area would swamp our work. We cannot make any headway, unless we tackle the whole area at once."

Answer: "My own experience is different. If we put off taking a necessary step till everyone else is ready for it, we shall never make move on. We must have the courage to take the plunge, even if we are all alone. There are certain difficulties in the way, but we have to overcome them. Many of the difficulties that deter us are imaginary, for instance, no one hinders my work here in Sevagram, if I can only move the hearts of the people of Sevagram. That is all that I need to do."

At the end of February the All-India Hindustani Prachar Sabha began its conference at Wardha under the chairmanship of Gandhi. In the opening speech, he said:

"The task confronting you is, in a way, comparatively small, and yet big. It is small because it requires very little effort, but the consequences with which it is charged are truly tremendous. Dr. Tarachand tells us that originally the language was a common language spoken by both the Hindus and the Musalmans, though it is today known by various names. It is a painful reflection that a people that constituted an integral whole at one time have become divided into two camps. Their language too is becoming different, if it has not already become so. The gulf is daily widening. As a result of the efforts of Shri Tandon, the Congress at Cawnpore adopted the definition of Hindustani as the language which is spoken by village folk of northern India, whether Hindus or Musalmans, and written in either Nagari or Urdu script, but the Congress could do little to implement the resolution.

"In 1942, the Hindustani Prachar Sabha took up this work at the instance of the late Shri Jamnalal Bajaj, but he passed away soon after. In 1942, I along with other Congress leaders, was arrested; I was released later on medical grounds. But even during my illness I followed the progress of the work that was being done by Shri Nanavati to propagate Hindustani.

"It gave me joy to find that it held out the prospect of success. I see no reason why what was at one time the common language of both the Hindus and Musalmans should not again become our lingua franca. In North India, the Hindus and Musalmans are descended from ancestors that spoke and wrote a common language.

It should require far less labour to revive that old common language than to create two different languages, Urdu and Hindi.

"Village folk in northern India, whether Hindus or Musalmans, even today speak the same tongue and some even write the same language. It is now for you to decide as to what should be done to bring our labours to a successful completion. The function of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha is to implement your decisions.

"I am sorry that for reasons of health I observe silence for the whole day, so far as possible. During the last three months, I have broken my silence during daytime only, perhaps on three occasions. Today, it being Monday, I am observing silence. I hope that it will not interfere with your work or put you to inconvenience."

In his closing address on February 27, Gandhi traced the history of his association with Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and how he had introduced the idea of the two scripts as early as the Indore session of the *sammelan* in 1917. And later he improved upon it. Still later the *sammelan* retraced its steps. So with Jamnalalji he started the Hindustani Prachar Sabha in 1942. At Nagpur, as Dr. Abdul Huq had pointed out, he (Gandhi) had made a mistake and he retraced his steps by never calling the meeting again of the Bharatiya Sahitya Sammelan.

His concern for which he had invited their help was to evolve from the two streams, Hindi and Urdu, the lingua franca of India, that is, Hindustani. For this there is no need to wait for a gesture from one or the other. Satyagraha teaches us to do our duty irrespective of what others may or may not do and leave the rest to God. Effort made in a good cause is never wasted.

He had been requested to send a message to the conference of Anjuman-i-Islam. He replied in a letter written in Urdu saying that he could no longer advocate either Hindi or Urdu alone. He wished both to prosper, but at the same time he hoped that a day would soon come when the two would meet and become one.

As Dr. Tarachand had pointed out, the Hindustani language was already in existence. It boasted of a fine literature too. But they could not afford to rest on their laurels. Though they derived hope from the past, they were more concerned with the present and the future. Many people were today obsessed with the squabble of Urdu *versus* Hindi. One side tried to Persianize the language as far as possible, the other to Sanskritize it. But the masses did not understand

either. They understood and appreciated simple Hindustani. It was this language which they had to safeguard and extend. The price that it demanded was that they should all learn both the scripts. He had been told that whilst the Hindu boys were willing to learn Urdu script, the Muslim boys refused to learn the Devanagari. His answer was that the gain was his, who learnt the two scripts. Those who shirked the necessary about to make a useful addition to their knowledge would alone be the losers.

Evolution of a common inter-provincial language for the people of India was worthwhile for its own sake and worthy of their best endeavour. Therefore, they should not mind whether they were very few or many. If they persevered, then success was bound to attend their effort.

A meeting of the A.-I.S.A. was held at Sevagram at the end of March. Questions put to Gandhi touched upon all the aspects of constructive programme and especially the re-orientation of khadi. At the last meeting of the Charkha Sangh, it was decided that part of the price should be paid in yarn. They had decided to realize two pice only in the rupee in yarn for khadi sold through the khadi *bhandars*. Jajuji, the secretary of the sangh, wanted the proportion increased to one hank of yarn for every rupee worth khadi sold. Secondly, he had suggested that wherever khadi was produced, at least one yard per capita should be consumed locally. Thirdly, the yarn that was given in exchange for khadi should be either spun by the purchaser himself or by his family. At present, the tendency was to buy yarn anyhow or from anywhere.

Characterizing Jajuji's proposals as very modest, Gandhi said that he himself would go much farther. In olden days, Bombay was the Manchester of India for khadi. Khadi manufactured in the distant places was brought and sold in Bombay, thanks to Shri Vithaldas Jerajani's genius for salesmanship. It was through his efforts that swadeshi was first introduced to the public of Bombay and later khadi, but Gandhi had since realized that that was not the proper course. Khadi produced in a particular place should be consumed there in the first instance.

If people in any place produced without difficulty more khadi than their requirement, it could be supplied to the nearest place in need. A district should be the maximum limit or a province at the utmost. He for himself did not want to go as far as the province.

A district was big enough for their purpose. The ideal, however, was that just enough khadi for local requirement should be produced in each village. How many out of the 700,000 villages could make that boast at present? Even in the villages where khadi was being produced only a fraction of the spinners and weavers were themselves using it—all the efforts of the Charkha Sangh in this behalf notwithstanding. This was a travesty of the khadi ideal.

The proportion of half anna worth of yarn to be delivered for one rupee worth of khadi sold was not for the villages. There, khadi should be exchanged for yarn alone. Were they afraid that by insisting on payment in yarn, they would lose custom in the cities? Unless they could shed their fear, they would kill khadi. Khadi had won for itself a place of honour in society, the rich took pride in buying khadi produced by the poor. But that was not enough. If they limited the sphere of khadi, it would serve as a means for providing economic relief to the needy, but it would not help them to win swaraj non-violently. He was not prepared for it.

If by insisting on the rule for self-spinning, he was the only one khadi-wearer left in the end, he would not mind it. They had accepted khadi as a symbol of non-violence. They had taken it up in terms of swaraj. He would let khadi die a natural death, if it was God's will, but they should not kill it by their timidity and lack of faith. Those who could not for any reason spin for themselves should get their wives, mothers, sisters or servants in the house to spin for them. In an extremity, they could obtain yarn spun by a neighbour, never by paying a fancy price.

Warming up to the subject of constructive programme, Gandhi stated: "I am as impatient as any of you to reach our goal, but I realize that the task is an uphill one. India has been enslaved for so long, that it has killed all the initiative and originality in us and has filled us with the paralysis of despair. The constructive work cannot make headway without a resuscitation of these lost qualities in us and the attainment of independence through non-violence and truth must remain an empty dream unless the constructive work can be carried through to success. Freedom is bound to come. It is coming. But mere political freedom will not satisfy me. It will certainly not satisfy the world, which expects much bigger things from India. Independence of my conception means nothing less than the realization of the 'Kingdom of God within you' and on this earth.

I would rather work for and would die in the pursuit of this dream, though it may never be realized. That means infinite patience and perseverance. If India is satisfied with the mere attainment of her political independence and there is nothing better for me to do, you will then find me retiring to the Himalayas, leaving those who wish to listen to me to seek me out there."

In April, Gandhi arrived in Bombay to inspect the first camp of the women workers conducted under the auspices of the Kasturba Memorial Trust. In his one hour's talk to eighty women workers on the 11th, he gave practical advice on various problems that might confront them in their work.

Dealing with the question of common prayer, Gandhi said that he had learnt that common prayers had been excluded from their routine, lest any one should feel that religion was being imposed upon them. Speaking for himself, he could say that he could do and he had often done without food for days on end, but he could not do without prayer even for a single day. Individual prayer was there, but no one should fight shy of collective prayer. Man was a social being. If men and women could eat together and play together and work together, why should they not then pray together? Why should any one feel the need to pray away from everybody's gaze? Was there anything sinful or shameful in prayer that it should not be said in public?

For close on fifty years, he had been a believer in public prayer. From his early days in South Africa, he had among his associates and co-workers men and women of every religion. Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Parsis, all used to join him in the prayer. In India, men and women in crowds attended his prayers wherever he went. He had been told that they did not come to attend the prayers, but they came just to have his *darshan.* Even if it was so, they came because they wanted to join him—a man of prayer. He was aware that he had not come as near to God as he wanted to. His realization of truth and ahimsa was still far from perfect, otherwise there would be no need for him to use any speech. His very being would radiate truth and ahimsa, so that they would be able to see it on his face and feel its presence. He had often said that perfect ahimsa of one individual was quite enough for the whole world. Whatever measure of success he had attained in the realization of truth and non-violence was the result of prayer.

And prayer should be a spontaneous upwelling of the heart. One should not pray, if one felt that the prayer was a burden. God was not hungry for man's prayer or praise. He tolerated all, because He was all Love. If they felt that they owed a debt to Him who is the giver of all things, they should remember Him and pray to Him out of sheer gratitude. The fear of incurring anybody's ridicule or displeasure should never deter one from performing one's elementary duty towards the Maker. To illustrate his remark, he told them the story of Prophet Daniel.

Answering a question as to what were the good and bad points of Indians as a nation, Gandhi stated that he was convinced that in the sum the former far outweighed the latter. The Indians had many defects. India was a slavery dated much farther back than the British conquest of India. Slavery of the evil customs and superstitions, he knew, was the worst form of slavery. Yet the solace that he could find in India, he could find nowhere else. He had lived in England and he had spent the best part of his life in South Africa. Yet he could not adopt those countries as his home.

In reply to a friend's query years ago, he had said that he wanted to die in the lap of his mother. His own mother who was a frail little woman had died years ago. But Mother India with her eighty crores of hands and eighty crores of feet and forty crores of mouths had beckoned to him from across the seas and he could not resist that call. What did it matter if that venerable mother appeared sick and paralysed today?

Glossary

Ahimsa, non-violence.
Ashram, a hermitage; a place for study and discipline of life.
Ayurvedic, belonging to Hindu system of medicine.
Ba, mother.
Babu, Mr.
Bande Mataram, Hail Mother; the refrain of the Indian national anthem known by the same name.
Bania, merchant.
Bapu, father.
Behn, sister.
Bhajan, a devotional song.
Bhakti, devotion.
Bhandar, store.
Brahmachari, one observing continence.
Chapati, thin flat cake made of wheat flour; bread.
Charkha, a spinning wheel.
Darshan, sight of a venerated person or deity.
Dhanush takli, a spinning instrument plied with a bow.
Dharmashala, a building donated for charitable use; a pilgrim's rest-house.
Gadi, throne.
Ghat, a mountain range.
Ghee, clarified butter.
Goonda, hooligan.
Gur, molasses.
Gurudev, a preceptor; a spiritual guide.
Harijan, a man of God; untouchable.
Hartal, a strike.
Himsa, violence.
Jamadar, a petty officer.

Ji, an affix added to names denoting respect, e.g., Gandhiji.
Khaddar, khadi, hand-woven cloth from hand-spun yarn.
Kisan-Majdoor-Praja-Raj, peasants' and workers' rule.
Kisan, peasant.
Kisan sabha, peasants' organization.
Kumkum, red ochre; auspicious vermilion mark put on the forehead.
Lokamanya, respected by the people.
Maharaja, king; ruler.
Mahatma, a great soul.
Mal, thick string connecting and regulating the two discs of a spinning wheel.
Mantra, a sacred formula; incantation.
Maulana, a Muslim divine.
Panchayat, a village council of five elected members; a council of village elders.
Pandal, canopy.
Pandit or pundit, a learned Hindu teacher; a prefix to certain Brahmin family names, e.g., Pandit Nehru.
Paramatma, the Supreme Spirit.
Phooka, an unnatural and cruel method of continuing the lactation period of a cow or buffalo.
Pinjrapole, a shelter for crippled and aged cows.
Purna Swaraj, Complete Independence.
Qaid-e-Azam, great leader.
Raj, rule.
Ramzan, a sacred Muslim month during which fast is observed.
Rashtrabhasha, national language.
Rishi, a seer.
Ryot, an Indian peasant.
Sabha, conference; organization.
Sadhana, a persistent effort; dedication.
Safai, cleaning.
Samadhi, sepulchre.
Sammelan, conference.
Sanatanist, orthodox Hindu.
Sangh, organization.
Sardar, nobleman; a honorific term, e.g., Sardar Patel.
Sari, a long piece of cloth worn as outer garment by Indian women.
Satvik, virtuous.

Satyagraha, "a force which is born of truth and non-violence"; tenacious clinging to truth; civil or non-violent resistance.
Satyagrahi, one practising satyagraha.
Shri, Mr.
Shrimati, Mrs.
Suran, a kind of root vegetable.
Swadeshi, belonging to, or made in, in one's own country.
Swami, a monk.
Swaraj, self-government; self-rule.
Takli, spindle-like spinning instrument.
Vaidyaraj, a doctor practising the Hindu system of medicine.
Vasant Panchami, a day of spring festival.
Yogi, one who practises yoga—intense concentration on one subject.
Zamindar, landlord.
Zamindari, landlordism.

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